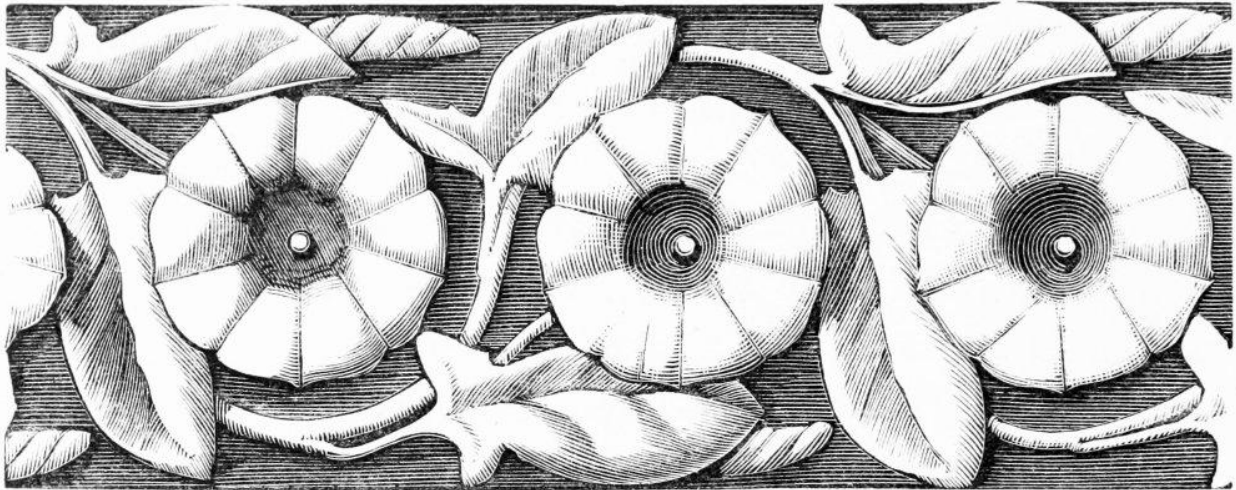


SHORT WORKS BY WOMEN NOT ON PROJECT GUTENBERG (YET)

The source of these public domain works is Archive.org, by way of GoogleBooks. Although some of the authors have works on PG, thanks to Distributed Proofreaders, they can't catch everything. Following are interesting stories, non-fiction, criticism, and poetry by women authors. Marguerite Wilkinson's selection does contain poetry by the men she mentions in her essay. Note: because of the nature of optically-scanned books, typos will be present – a U will stand for 'll', an H for "li" and so on. I've tried to rectify this in shorter works like the poetry, but it is a wee bit labor intensive for me to go through the whole piece. Several of these I hand-copied from the original PDFs, page by page. The borders are all from books already on Project Gutenberg.

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THE DOMINANT STRAIN

From: **The Great Tradition And Other Stories**

By Katharine Fullerton Gerould

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It is with some reluctance that I give to a public on whose sympathy a reporter of unvarnished facts can never count, the details that follow. I carry light cargoes for choice; and why I should have been drawn into the uncongenial epic of Rodney Teele, God only knows. But the thing happened — happened, alack! to my knowledge and witnessing eye; and I have been (even I, with my inveterate preference for comic opera) so struck by all it meant that I cannot refrain. I should call the episode Biblical in its large effectiveness, if I did not see in it refinements of weakness that the Hebrew Scriptures knew nothing of. Isaiah or Ezekiel would have smashed through the rotten spots in the fabric with a lean inspired fist; or lightning would have descended from an ever-prepared heaven. Besides, in those days, it could never have happened: America is not Palestine. There is our fatal modern softness in it; in spite of a hardness that suits quite well with the Chronicles.

It is not to be expected, I suppose, that our children shall keep on learning human nature from Jezebel and Joseph, though the Old Testament is, to my thinking, as good a primer of sociology as The Kallikak Family. It is inevitable that they should learn it from people like Rodney Teele, who was a king of sorts, as thousands of stockholders know. The newspapers, in their easy way, used to compare him to Napoleon. But he was a Napoleon without a Josephine and without a Saint Helena. He will stand, however, as well as any conqueror of them all, to illustrate the secular way of things. There are always human passions at work, and an ineluctable Voice that interferes. We have lost and gained many things in the twentieth century; but irony remains.

Money is so much more important than anything else, nowadays, whether to governments or to individuals, that we must be forgiven for facing men like Rodney Teele with bated breath; for thinking

that the personality which is moved by a brain like that is something out of the common sort. In the vast perspectives of to-day, pirates look like sneak-thieves, and the Medicis like push-cart men. How we are to escape reverence for Rodney Teele and his like, I do not see. Certainly, though I have no more reason to be a snob than most men, I always felt his importance. Even when I had seen him pityingly through the strangest episode of his life, I still felt that this man was not quite as other men. Nothing is so romantic as democracy, which worships its kings wherever they happen to blaze forth. Strength is not yet old-fashioned; and our fists may prove that yet on the front teeth of Europe. There it is: all the primeval passions astir at the mere mention of Rodney Teele ! I must get on with my story. It will not, if I can write the truth out calmly, leave you cold.

I knew Rodney Teele, Junior, at Saint Jude's, and later at Harvard. We had been good friends at school, where a gilded equality prevailed; and, though I could not afford at Harvard, as he did, to live on the Gold Coast, I saw a lot of him in that most democratic of universities. Rodney, of course, had no hereditary social pull that was recognized on the banks of the Charles; but it would have been mediaeval and ridiculous to leave a fabulous fortune like that out in the cold, when the fabulous fortune was also a good fellow. Rodney had not an ounce of vice in him; by which I do not mean that he was a weakling. He was a perpetually smouldering creature, agog for achievements of the moral order. It's a complicated business to be righteous in these days, when the devil is flinging so many paradoxes about. It took Rodney's father, in a premature skull-cap and surrounded with secretaries, to do that. Rodney, Junior, had somehow the simplicity of the soil: he was no more complicated than a crop of corn. The things that swayed him were blind, unphraseable forces. It would have taken the Department of Agriculture to analyze him. He was, for all practical purposes, merely a good fellow — but waiting, you could see, for his chance. Unless his chance came in extraordinarily lucky guise, he would probably mess it. That was the impression of our crowd. We liked Rodney all the better for not being a replica of his Machiavellian parent — whom we, as good Ameri-

cans, knew all about. For my part, I thought Rodney would be distinctly up against it when it came to sharing the management of the Teele millions. His allowance was enormous, but, after all, he wasn't supposed to do anything but spend it. He used to finance us all when we were hard up, which shows he was a good sort. If he hadn't been, he would have been the last man we could borrow from. No one, however, could have called Rodney Teele a financial genius : he was peculiarly the heir of all his ancestors who hadn't made good. My own Europeanized kin thought him dull, though they never failed to tell every one when he had been staying with us, or when I had spent a college holiday in the vast and gloomy New York mansion that his widowed father inhabited alone. Rodney belonged, as a matter of course, to his father's unfashionable religious sect; but he made cheques serve in lieu of more personal services. Rodney would never teach in the Sunday-school. That was emphatically not the chance he was waiting for. At that time, he was a bit of an agnostic.

Out of college, I naturally saw less of Rodney. I had just enough money to potter about and think of being an architect, because that gave me a chance to go to Europe on fantastic pretexts of studying detail. I eventually became an architect, but I am not, even now, a very good one. Accordingly, my friends' prophecy of huge commissions from the Teeles for every sort of edifice, public and private, has never been fulfilled. It was my own fault, however, I am sure. Rodney Teele, Senior, approved of my companionship for his son. I have never known why, as my attitude to the decorations of the big Fifth Avenue house must have been insufferable. I was at the priggish age.

Rodney himself was too unhappy, I think, at the time, to want anything but sympathy. He did not like his job, which consisted in being introduced to the diplomacy of high finance. I don't think Rodney disapproved particularly of his father's methods, or cared which way the eternal controversies and litigations went. I am convinced it was not the muck-raking that made him wretched. He was simply incapable of understanding a vast financial policy; and that incapacity, considering what was

expected of him, naturally made for his unhappiness. He was like a child wrinkling its brows and trying to spell an elusive word — a child who knows that spelling is important. Rodney Teele's fortune would have been safe enough with his son; but he wanted more than that: he wanted to establish a dynasty of Teele. He wanted to leave a name that would terrify in itself; and he wanted his son to be a man, if possible, of more power than he. It was a mad thing to ask of the gods: to permit Rodney Teele to exist over again in his son, to let the lightning strike twice in that particular place. Certainly the gods showed no sign of permitting it. Rodney was loyal, but not to the point of genius.

Old Teele once did me the honor — as an intimate friend of Rodney's, and a quite unimportant, a virtually anonymous creature — of consulting me.

"The boy has stuff in him," he said quietly, with an interrogative lift of his left eyebrow. (You've seen it caught in snapshots.)

"Indeed, he has. But I suspect that it isn't that kind."

"He looks as if he would do something, sometime."

"He will. But no one except his guardian angel knows what. When Rodney wants anything supremely, he'll get it. But until he does want something supremely, he will be perfectly ineffectual. He can't apply his hidden powers until an overmastering desire unseals them. That's my notion of it, sir."

Rodney Teele, Senior, pushed back his skull-cap and gazed at me, as non-committally as an idol.

"Perhaps you are right. We must find the key — we must find the key, with God's help."

It did not seem to me unnatural that he should speak of the Deity. A man like that must believe in something besides himself; there must be a discreet colleague somewhere, or the weight of the world would be too much. Napoleon had his star, and Rodney Teele had his own God, in whom he trusted — a God made vivid by a rococo taste in the essentials of sal-

vation. His God was too much like a salaried confidant to suit me; but I have never doubted Rodney Teele's sincerity, or his capacity for mystical vision. The world knows only his charities; but once or twice I have perceived the Hebraic conviction that backed them. I have seen Rodney Teele at prayer.

So we were waiting, Rodney Teele and I, leaning from our separated orbits, to see what would move young Rodney. It was nearly a year before we saw — nearly a year, at least, before I did; and, characteristically, I saw it in the morning paper. Young Rodney had married. God knows where he met the girl, or why she bowled him over. Artistically speaking, it was a mesalliance of the finest. She was not even notorious. I waited for some word from Rodney himself. None came; and after the first day the papers, one and all, were silent. I didn't know what sums went into silencing them; but there was not even the usual mention of a fruitless interview. They were dumb as fish. The great negotiations for the Labrador railway went on, and the Bolivian loan pursued its path. Rodney Teele was at the helm, and whether young Rodney was working incognito among the crew, or had been marooned on some coral island, no one knew, any more than I. I suffered honest pain, for I had been fond of Rodney; and for his father I had that dazzled and guilty respect which I fancy most citizens shared with me. I wrote to my friend, but I got no answer. I did not write to the elder Teele; from him, in the circumstances, I was as cut off as if I lived in Mars. In the world of loans and railways and foreign bourses, I was as nothing.

Once, hoping for a clue, I went to his unfamiliar church, and saw him, solitary in his prominent pew. There was no clue there, though I watched him all through a long sermon. He looked — if there has ever been such a thing — like a Chinese Jew: son of a mandarin and a princess of the house of David. Nothing else expresses the baffling quality of that parchment face in which, above the thin, vertically-drooping moustache and the high cheek-bones, black eyes burned. Fire and scroll alike were inscrutable. The ends of Asia seemed to have met in that countenance, fixed incongruously upon the optimistic preacher of an upstart creed. I took home a tremen-

dous impression, but I no longer hoped for clues. Rodney was fair and stocky. ... He would go under. For six months that conviction was all my sympathy had to feed upon.

Rodney Teele was not lost to my musings, however. It seemed incredible that he could drop out of sight like a kidnapped girl. Sometimes I hoped that his father was financing him in the antipodes — Celebes, or Argentina; that somewhere, under another name, he was the lord of rolling acres and queer exotic comforts. Sometimes I feared that there had been a bitter quarrel, and that all young Rodney's latent force had gone into suppressing himself absolutely out of a world where his father's name was so much as known. In that case he would have to go far afield. It was very clear that, whatever had happened, Rodney was not trading on that name — not even to the extent of making the fortune of some reporter. Somebody's will-power, whether the father's or the son's, had created that sinister and abysmal silence. The case of Rodney Teele was not even a stock subject at clubs where men had known him — perhaps merely because the newspapers didn't keep him before the world. I imagine we are far more nose-led by the press than we will admit. The Teeles had never gone in for "society;" and young Rodney would never be missed by Wall Street so long as old Rodney was there. Sometimes it seemed to me that I was the only living creature who gave him a thought. "Very curious," said the one or two men I spoke to; then shrugged their shoulders, and left it — as if, because old Rodney Teele was silent, it were bad form for any one else to wag his tongue. But I was not content; and I waited. I kept myself in a breathless state because — because I felt it shocking that some one should not be in a breathless state. And, because no one else was breathless, I came to consider that I had been the only person who had really cared about young Rodney. I don't defend my logic; but, at all events, that is the state of mind I achieved in the six months after Rodney's marriage.

It was six months or more after the lightning-flash in the papers — a lightning-flash which had been followed by no reverberation — that I went one evening, as carelessly as you like, to the telephone. The call was long — I remember rattling the receiver

impatiently to stop it. The message I listened to came in the precise, chill tones of Luke Standish, old Rodney Teele's private secretary. He stated his name and his authority, then made a bland request that I would come to Mr. Teele's house that evening, if possible, for ten minutes' talk with the great man. It was less a request, really, than an appointment: the voice mentioned an hour, and hardly waited for my acquiescence, which came, indeed, mechanically. It was a voice obviously not accustomed to discussion of previous engagements. It dropped the information — but not in the tone of apology — that Mr. Teele was sailing for Europe the next morning. Then I heard the click at the other end. "Hang you, I knew that ! " I exclaimed, as I hung up the receiver. It was annoying to be told, after such a peremptory summons, something that every one with a penny to spend on a newspaper had known for a week. I felt as irritated as if I had been a competitor to be crushed; and the irritation lasted. All irritation dropped, however, at half past eight that evening in Rodney Teele's library, when I stood once more facing him. The great cavalcade of books swept round the vast room in serried order, except where they broke ranks over the fireplace to admit the famous Rembrandt. I had seen the room before, but never by lamplight. It had seemed to me senselessly luxurious — barring the Rembrandt — and I had turned up my nose at the collection, which ran to bindings rather than editions. Rodney Teele was no connoisseur; and even the Rembrandt, as I knew, had been a mere curious accident of his career. I remembered distinctly my own earlier scorn; but now my scorn dropped with my irritation. Rodney Teele himself, slim and terrible, was a collector's piece that put even the Rembrandt to scorn. The dim Dissenting light of the church where I had last seen him had done him no justice, though it had given the hint of what I now saw focussed by the sixty-four-candle-power lamp. What mating had produced Rodney Teele, I wondered, as I stood before him. I remember thinking fantastically that Who's Who must have lied. By what Mendelian miracle could the simple Middle-Western pair who were his accredited progenitors have achieved this offspring ?

The face that was bent towards mine was more

Oriental than ever: the cheek-bones higher, the moustache thinner and grayer, the face more like old vellum — and the black eyes, by contrast, fiercer. "Inscrutable" is a cheap word to describe him with; there was no mystery there, in the crude sense, because there was no suggestion of anything to solve.

That face had everything to say — and nothing to tell. It showed the door to curiosity. Rodney Teele might have been meditating the Infinite in some high gorge of the Yalu since the Mings were overthrown. Only the eyes were like those we feel blazing upon us from the pages of the everlasting Chronicles. I thought how hideous it would be if I had come there to question him.

He did not offer me a cigar, though I saw the conventional box at hand. Rodney Teele did not smoke, himself, and he probably forgot it. I cannot say how unimportant I felt.

He began speaking at once — with a quite Occidental precision, in a soft, slightly nasal voice.

"I am leaving for Carlsbad to-morrow. My physicians insist upon it."

I bowed.

"I think it a quite unnecessary precaution, but as I am not needed here for the moment, I judged it well to be tractable. Any means of adding to one's strength after the age of sixty are desirable in themselves."

"Of course." I spoke shortly, determined not to grovel. But my own voice, I noticed, was low.

"I remembered you as an intimate of my son's — an intimate whom, in former days, I was glad to welcome."

"I have always been very fond of Rodney."

"Yes — just so. And Rodney, I think, was fond of you — though I do not speak with authority of my son's feelings." He smiled.

"He certainly was." Some of the breathlessness of the months just past got into my voice at this point. To that I would stick, through thick and thin, nor care what the Power opposite me said.

"I felt inclined to ask you — I have not put the question to any one else — ^before leaving America for a rather long time, if you know where Rodney is. I quite understand that you may prefer not to answer."

"On the contrary, I prefer to answer, and with complete veracity. I know nothing whatever about Rodney except that I saw some months ago in a newspaper that he was married. I wrote to him here, but never had any reply."

"Yes. Your letter is probably among these."
He took up a little pile of letters from the table, removed the elastic band that confined them, and held them out to me. " Would you care to extract it ?"

The packet was not very large, and my own letter was quickly found. I fingered it, with the proprietary instinct one has towards old letters of one's own rediscovered in strange places or after many days. Then another impulse conquered that: the impulse not to stop my old message on its delayed and doubtless vain quest for Rodney Teele. No; if it ever reached him, so much the better. It would speak for itseK more clearly than I could speak for it. I handed back the packet.

"I think I'll let it take its luck. There just might come a day when Rodney would be glad to find it."

"As you like." Rodney Teele replaced the elastic band and laid the bundle to one side. "But it is perhaps fair to tell you that I think there is less chance of its reaching Rodney here than in any other spot on earth."

I shrugged my shoulders. "Let it take its luck," I repeated. Then I grew bold. "Mr. Teele," I said, "you leave me at liberty to infer that you did not approve of Rodney's marriage. Surely you, and you alone — since you managed to choke off the news-

papers — can tell best where Rodney is likely to be; for Rodney must have talked with you since he talked with any one else. No one, I feel perfectly sure, has seen or heard of Rodney since his marriage. I am convinced that, if any one had, it would have been I. And you knew enough at least to silence the press — otherwise, there would have been a dozen reports a day."

He fingered a paper-cutter — not nervously, but methodically, as if with a purpose.

"If the newspapers have reported nothing, it is, so far as I know, because there has been nothing to report. I requested them to refrain from publishing anything that was not absolutely authentic. That, they were kind enough to do. If Rodney himself had chosen to fill a column a day, I could not, of course, have prevented it." He smiled blandly.

I may have looked incredulous, for he went on. "I am speaking only the literal truth. Have the goodness not to doubt my word. It would have satisfied a natural curiosity on my part if they had succeeded in getting at Rodney. But I am led to infer that he has the family dislike for informing the public about his private affairs."

The sense of his power ebbed from me a little, at that moment. It was inconceivable that any one could come close enough to old Rodney Teele to give him a strangle-hold. He was incalculably remote. I, at all events, was very far away from him — quite out of his perspective, too small to focus. If I had been something within his ken — a corporation, for example — I should doubtless not have ventured. But it really could not matter to Rodney Teele what went on in the insect world.

"I am very sorry that I cannot give you any information about Rodney. If I had any — unless Rodney had forbidden it — it would have been yours unreservedly. Would you mind my appealing to you in turn? Did anything pass between you and your son that could give an old friend — me, to be explicit — a clue to go on? I would do a good deal to get in touch with him. I would make sacrifices. Did he drop nothing when he had his interview with you?"

Rodney Teele's left eyebrow, as he answered, had its peculiar interrogative lift — that lift which so seldom accompanied a real question. "I had no interview with my son. None was needed."

"You mean ?"

For the first time, he spoke sharply, and departed from the stilted articulation of the self-made man. "When the young fool decided to throw his life away, he wasn't fool enough to ask me if I approved ! Even young Rod had sense enough for that. No, sir: we needed no interview! He wrote me a letter saying what he was going to do; and then he had enough remnants of decency to get out. I've heard nothing of him since." He shut his lips close, and returned to his delicate operations with the paper-cutter. I was left staring.

"Then young Rod never even asked you what you felt about it?"

"My son knew what I should feel." He had returned to his precise manner. "For a long time he has been perfectly aware of my principles on the subject of marriage. He has known that under no conditions would I sanction his taking a wife who was not eminently fit to bear the next generation of Teeles. Wealth I should not necessarily have asked for; but a stock worth crossing with my own I think I had a right to expect. I am by nature, perhaps, something of an aristocrat in these matters, Mr. Souther. I do not believe in taking wives among the Midianitish women. And — I say it with due humility — the son of Rodney Teele had no ordinary responsibilities."

Useless to come into that court with a tale of human passion ! It had always seemed to me — though I knew nothing about it — that between father and son there would be a deep instinctive sympathy in these matters: that a man could hardly be unmoved by the fresh desire engendered of his own desire — however deep beneath the ashes his own desire might have come to lie. But Rodney Teele hardly seemed, even reminiscently, the human male. He had the most celibate face I have ever seen.

A strange person to be prating of the great human business of pedigrees !

"The girl may be as good as gold," I muttered.

"She may." He conceded it with no air of concession. "But I am justified in supposing that if my son had honestly believed her, on all reasonable grounds, acceptable to me as a daughter-in-law, he would have intimated as much. He made no attempt to defend his action to me. The Teeles are good pioneer American stock. I have been blessed with success beyond that of most men of my generation, but I should not have asked my son to marry any one of better birth than himself — if better birth, from a sane American standpoint, there can be. The importance of heredity is being so completely demonstrated at the present day by the men of science, that I should have considered it a gross dereliction of my duty as a father and a steward of God's wealth, had I wanted less. My son knew my views on the subject, and, if he had met them in choosing a wife, he would have told me so. He had no reason, in that case, to expect opposition from me. He was my only child, and he had never found me niggardly with affection or with money."

"He is proud, young Rodney," I mused.

"Too proud — and yet not quite proud enough, I am afraid," his father affirmed, with mild precision.

"And now, I do not think I need keep you longer, Mr. Souther. I thank you for coming. I am sure you understand a father's natural curiosity." He rose.

"Have you any message for Rodney, if I should run across him in your absence ? "

He settled his eye-glass on his fine nose and looked at me interrogatively.

"Any message? Certainly not. If I had felt it imperative to communicate with my son, I could have employed people to trace him. I assure you that I respect his evident desire for privacy. And I trust you will not think it necessary to inform

any one of my inquiries. In fact" — he looked me over from head to foot — "if you have any doubts on that point, I should be glad if you would indicate to me an adequate way of silencing them."

I was hot. "There are some things that are not bought and sold, Mr. Teele," I declared. "Among them are confidences between gentlemen."

There was the hint of a smile on his stiff, smooth features. "I was not referring to money," he answered.

I could not contradict him, though I still felt that my impulse of anger had been justified.

"It is very difficult to know, in personal matters, just what another man may consider to be his duty," he continued. I could not gainsay such a platitude, and judged it better to say nothing. The interview was obviously at an end; and for nothing in the world would I consciously prolong it. I moved to the door, while Rodney Teele rang for a servant to show me out. We had not shaken hands.

He was still holding the enamelled bell-handle, when a footman entered. Under his perfectly adequate mask, I thought the man surprisingly pale. He ignored me, and handed, very respectfully, a card to Mr. Teele. I waited impatiently for the chance to say a definite "Good-evening" to my host. When I heard no order given, no sound made, I finally turned my head.

Rodney Teele was standing near the great table, but erect, quite independent of the support it offered. His eyes were bent on the card, and, from every tense and narrowed feature, I could see that he was considering a plan of action and did not mean to speak prematurely. I was uncomfortable — Rodney Teele in the act of decision was, even to an outsider, an impressive figure. I felt, besides, as if I were looking through a keyhole; such intensity, impenetrable though it was, he must usually have reserved, instinctively, for moments of solitude. I wanted desperately to run; yet I did not want to break in upon that tremendous concentration by definitely leaving the room.

He spoke, in a moment, with chill sharpness — still looking at the card. He did not even glance at the servant.

"How does it happen that a card like this is brought to me ? Flodden knows perfectly well that I never see any one except by appointment."

The man was nervous, I could see, and I turned to gaze at the Rembrandt. But though I could be blind, I could not be deaf, to what passed.

"Flodden is out, sir, and Dempsey at the door is new, and Mr. Standish has left for the night, and Dempsey didn't quite venture, sir, he said, to — " The voice died away in a genuine stammer. Clearly, there had been magic in the card.

"I see that I am served by a pack of fools." The voice was very quiet; quiet enough to match the impassive pagan face that got so vividly (stare as I would at the masterpiece) between me and the Rembrandt.

Then I heard a sharp intake of the breath. "Mr. Souther!" I faced about. The master's back was turned, now, to the servant, and the man was surreptitiously drawing the back of his hand across his forehead. I saw the gesture vaguely over his master's shoulder.

I hurried forward. "I am sorry to have been an interruption. Good-night, Mr. Teele." I wanted, unUmitedly, to dissociate myself, once and for all, from Rodney Teele's affairs.

"Wait!" He lifted a peremptory finger. Apparently his decision was taken, and I saw at once, to my extreme disgust, that he had involved me in it. No one, it seemed to me, could ever have wanted to be with Rodney Teele more than half an hour. Humanly speaking, it was a strain. And he had not even offered me a cigar — damn his dictatorial eyes ! So, confusedly, reflected the sensitive young cub that

I was then.

He looked at me keenly — his purpose, I was sure, perfectly formed. "Will you be so good as to be present at an interview I have just decided to grant to this person ? I should be glad of a witness, and my secretary is spending the night with his mother before sailing with me to-morrow."

I looked at the card, held negligently under my nose by Rodney Teele's strong hand. "Mr. Rodney Teele, Jr.," was engraved on it. Only the "Mr." was crossed out in pencil, and "Mrs." written in above.

Every instinct in me cried out "No!" If there has to be a fight, I like a sporting proposition, and the handicap against the woman — whatever she was — was too great. I don't think there was one atom of curiosity in me concerning the event that was about to take place; curiosity is of comedy, and this was not comedy. But to stay seemed to be, in default of real knowledge, my best guess at the way to back young Rodney. "I'll stay," I said at last, rather thickly.

"Thank you." Then he turned to the man. "You may show her up here. Is she alone ? "

"Yes, sk."

"Bring her up at once." He tore the card carefully in two and dropped it into the waste-basket. To me, in the few minutes that went to the servant's descending and conveying his charge back to the library, he said nothing. We waited in silence, each staring at whatever spot on the book-hned wall was most convenient. I stole one look at him. His narrowed eyes seemed to slant slightly upward at the corners, and his thin gray moustache had precisely the vertical droop of a high Chinese official's. He was more than ever like a mandarin with whom one can exchange only Ollendorffian ideas, germane to the philosophy of neither.

At last we heard steps, and both of us, with a common impulse, faced the door. We must have looked like allies at bay. The footman did not announce the visitor in the usual way. He said only, "Here she is, sir!" and jfled, decorously but defi-

nately — hot-foot, no doubt, for the servants' hall. I moved over and closed the great mahogany door. Rodney Teele had given me no sign, but in some way his wishes had been communicated to me. Unless you gave yourself time to think, you would always, I fancy, have taken orders from Rodney Teele. I was annoyed, the instant I had done it: I was no lackey to forestall his desires. Then I came back to the situation.

There was no formal introduction. Rodney Teele mentioned my name to his son's wife — absently, I should say, except that he never gave the impression of doing anything absently. He motioned her to a chair — almost imperceptibly — but she paid no attention to the gesture. He sat down, himself, then, in his own desk-chair, and faced the two of us who stood on the other side of the table. Young Mrs. Teele had not even looked at me when my name was spoken; she had merely shrugged one shoulder slightly in my direction, as if the name of a minor annoyance like me did not matter. Treated so cavalierly, I found myself at liberty to be curious. Rodney Teele sat erect, as if in the judgment-seat — his yellow-white face, with the light full on it, emerging from vague, vast backgrounds of shadow. The woman, ignoring me utterly, stood facing him. For the moment I was free.

I knew, in an instant, that I should never understand why Rodney Teele, against such odds, had chosen her. "This is what it took to move young Rodney; this was his chance," my brain said with slow irony. In profile, under an ugly hat, her face did not, of course, have fair play; but, even so, it was not the profile of a beauty. Her figure was good, as most young American figures are good; but there was nothing extraordinary in posture, line, or carriage. Her eyes I could not see. More than ever, it seemed a mad adventure of young Rod's — and not so much mad, even, as outrageously unnecessary. But of course I did not know — never should know — what had flung them together, or what binding magic there had been in circumstance. Sometimes a man loves a woman for the place or the hour he has found her in. I was hideously uncomfortable — I had expected that she would have beauty, at least, to back her. Something in me said: "Make the most of

your bad moment; analyze this miracle, if you can."
But, most emphatically, I could not.

All this was a matter of only a few seconds to my quickened senses, my eager, tiptoe mind. Then I heard her speaking.

"I wasn't sure you'd see me. But I saw you were going to Europe to-morrow, and I risked everything."

The balances of judgment that I considered I was holding swayed perceptibly. The voice was good — perhaps a shade too powerful, too full of emotional possibilities, for our conventional code, but undeniably an asset. Still: to throw away that chance in life, for a voice — especially when it gave no positive guarantee of being the voice of a lady . . . Her EngUsh, as you wiU see, was well enough; but her intonations were not those of the privileged. I may as well record that fact now.

"It was a sudden decision to see you. My first, perhaps I should say my better, judgment suggested that I should most emphatically refuse. I hope you will justify my decision by being brief. What is your business with me.""

"I am Rodney's wife."

"That does not constitute business with me."

"My husband is your son, then."

"Did he send you to me?"

"He did not. He is as proud as the devil."

Rodney Teele's left eyebrow mounted. He did not look at me, but I felt, none the less, his dry triumph at seeing me find her taste questionable.

"Then certainly you have no business with me. Suppose we terminate this quite useless interview now." There was a slight emphasis on the last word.

"I thought you ought to know that your son is not well and is very poor.*"

"If he is poor, it is his own deliberate choice that has made him so. He had a good salary when he was in my employ. I need not speak of what his prospects were, for I dare say you considered them before you married him."

"I considered nothing."

"Then you were very foolish. I am quite sure that my son did not lure you into marrying him with promises of wealth. He, at least, has never suggested that I should turn my stewardship to uses that I do not approve of. I think you are courageous — to use a mild word — to ask me for money when my son feels it impossible to do so himself. I think you are not very proud to beg when my son will not beg."

"I am too proud to beg of any one but you. I am much too proud to beg of you for myself."

"Are you suggesting that you would take a price for freeing him? Let me say at once that I believe the marriage-tie to be a thing instituted of God. Since my son has chosen you, if you are faithful to him, I should consider him as much disgraced by divorce as he was by his marriage."

The ivory-white features stirred only so "much as speech necessitated. All the time his narrowed eyes searched her face. She was very game, at least.

"Even you couldn't part us." Her voice sank to a thrillingly harsh note. "And I tell you I am not asking for myself. I can go the hospital when my time comes." There was the faintest contraction of Rodney Teele's thin lips; but his face remained impenetrable as ever. "All I ask of you is to keep Rodney going till he can get a start. He had no money when he married me except what was in his pocket. He's got no fortune of his own, as you very well know, and I guess he always lived up to that magnificent salary you tell about. And, cast off as he is, he'll never go to any of his friends for help. What do you suppose Rodney Teele, Junior, can do in New York with you and his own pride both against him? You didn't train him to work with his hands, did you? He's taken what he could get, but it'll kill him in time. Do you think your only son is such a poor

proposition that you can't put a little of your money into him — even if he didn't marry the girl you picked out for him ? You can send him out West. Suppose you don't like me: he's your son, isn't he? And his child will be your grandchild, no matter who his mother is."

She stopped, and, putting her hands on the table, leaned forward across it. "You can't get away from that!"

Things were going very badly. I wished myself away, so helpless I felt. But her voice — the rich and complex organ that she could command — was a miracle. I wondered if it could have been the voice. . . .

Rodney Teele brought his hand down on the table. The gesture was very quiet, but I felt that, metaphorically speaking, the imperial thumb had been turned down.

"Two facts should, I think, be called to your attention, madam. One is that I can respond to no appeals made to me by any other person than my son himself. The other is that your child is of no importance to me." Again the slight emphasis— this time on "your."

I have never, before or since, had to stand by and listen to the speaking of such brutal things; yet Rodney Teele, saying them in his soft, slightly nasal voice, did not sound so brutal as he is written down. The complete detachment of his tone saved him — perhaps her — to some extent. He might have been a consulted oracle, giving forth discouraging information about Rodney Teele, Senior. Even so, I could not blame her for flashing back her answer at him with some shrillness. She had caught his emphasis on the pronoun.

"My child? And why not my child? I was an honest girl when your son married me. I am an honest woman now. I simply tell you your Christian duty. I am no Christian myself; but I don't believe they'd stand for your kind of charity."

Rodney Teele took up his paper-cutter and held it lightly between the middle fingers of his two hands.

"I am not accusing you of not being 'honest,' as you use the word. What I mean is this, woman ! The Teeles breed for virtues they have proved. They breed from a stock they can count on. If God has given me power in the land, the less reason why I should pass it on to people who are not my people nor their God my God. I have nothing against you; but you were not the wife for a Teele, or the mother for Teeles. My son told me of his marriage the day it was accomphshed. He told me who you were and whence you came. If he had had any effective arguments to reconcile me to it, he would have produced them then. If he had felt that circumstances were now such as to justify his approaching me, he would have approached me himself. I trust far more to my son's conscience than to yours. I do not say how I should meet any approach from him; but, in any case, I meet none that is not entirely his own. My son is silent; and certainly while he is silent you babble in vain. As for my fortune, rather than hand it down to generations that I can never be sure of, it shall go back to God." There was no passion in his tone — only a great gravity that harshened his soft voice slightly.

The woman turned away from him, and for the first time — though even then she did not look at me — I saw her full face. Her language had been that of the native-born — no trace of foreign accent. But the voice ran through a gamut of emotion that the pure American stock does not easily come by. And when I saw her face clearly, for a few seconds, under the lamplight, I found in it, too, something haunting and foreign — something like the mingled crudity and suggestiveness of a folk-song. I had no time to follow the clue, passionately concerned though I was to discover why she had so moved young Rodney. She turned back, while I was still discreetly searching her face, to Rodney Teele.

"You talk of God — you.^ God is supposed to be good, isn't he ? Why, there isn't a man, woman, or child in the whole country that doesn't know how you got rich, and despise you for it ! " Her voice was the very poetry of scorn. She was lyric, while old Rodney was detached; and escaped her own brutahy as he did his. He did not seem revengeful, or she

brazen. Painful, ugly, as the scene had been, even I, the witness, did not feel besmirched. She had strength, that girl, if she had no other virtue on earth. I could not honestly call her dark impressiveness beauty, or mistake her self-possession for breeding; but she was not simply a common creature.

Then I heard her take her farewell of Rodney Teele. "I don't know what you mean by the glorious Teele stock. If your son's child has an honest, healthy mother, I don't see why the Lord you seem to know so much about should ask for more. But I can't talk Scripture, I'm thankful to say ! It's for me to worry, I guess, when my child will have a grandfather like you."

She moved to the door. Rodney Teele rose, and rang the bell for the man to re-conduct her. He did not answer her, or bid her good-evening. Apparently neither would carry irony to the point of a conventional parting. As I heard the servant's footsteps approaching, I spoke to her. " Will you give my love to Rodney ? " She just glanced at me, and shrugged her shoulders, as if I had merely made some kind of inarticulate noise. She did not pretend to reply. Without one backward glance, she left the room; and the man closed the door behind them.

While their footsteps grew fainter, I had a moment of acute meditation, my eyes fixed on the ground. When I looked up, Rodney Teele was standing at the far end of the room by a window, his back turned to me. If I had been perplexed as to how to get out of that terrible library a quarter of an hour before, I was perplexed now tenfold. But before I could think how to say, "Good-night," I saw that I was to be spared the trouble of saying it at all. Rodney Teele was not thinking of me; doubtless he beheved that I had gone. One arm flung out horizontally, he was speaking to himself. I moved softly to the door. The words came clearly from that distant figure, its oblivious back turned to me. "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Then he dropped to his knees and was silent. In two minutes I was breasting the cool evening wind of the upper Avenue. I had encountered no servants, and had let myself out.

Young Rodney Teele died of pneumonia while his father was in Carlsbad. There was only the stark notice of the death in the papers — no hint of an address, no mention of the funeral : " Died, on _____ in New York City, of pneumonia, Rodney Teele, Jr."

I got just that and no more from our loquacious press; and it crossed my mind that the widow had shown herself almost a Teele by refusing — as she must have done — to be interviewed. Rodney Teele, on the other side of the ocean, was equally taciturn. Now and then, in the months after he had returned, I heard a man say furtively that old Rodney looked done up. But as he had no social existence, most reports of the sort came from Wall Street; and his untempered despotism in the world of high finance robbed those chance hints of their significance. He was more colossal, more hated, and more fawned on than he had ever been. The Lord, as he would surely have said, continued to bless his efforts. At the same time, his charities became more overwhelming, more cosmic than ever. He was the acknowledged treasury for promoters of all the most up-to-date and scientific reforms — the modern softness again, eating through the patriarchal fibre. He grew also more passionately religious, after his own queer kind. He seemed to me more than ever (for I occasionally saw him in his own house) to be in perpetual connection, by long-distance telephone, with his Maker. I do not speak flippantly; it is many years since there has been flippancy in any one of my many attitudes to Rodney Teele. I am merely trying to express the curious alliance in his manner between the mystical Dissenter and the financier sitting at the heart of an impressive modern machinery. Meanwhile the eugenists, the social reformers, the settlement-workers, the chosen missionary societies were gorged, and wiped the fatness of his wealth from their Ups. Suffragists, I believe, were always turned away before they got within the outer fringe of secretaries. He had hated one woman too much.

I say that I saw Rodney Teele occasionally. He sent for me now and then, and I dined with him alone in that empty house — singularly empty, because it seemed to have no hope, no future. We were, he and I and the servants, like the dwindling population of a citadel: safe while we lasted, but never to

be reinforced or rescued. It was depressing; and yet I felt that I owed it to him to sit opposite him, once every six months or so, and eat his imperial fare to the accompaniment of melancholy thoughts. We never discussed the scene of which I had been a witness; we never mentioned his dead son.. If Rodney had been living, I could not have gone there; but I had the sense, if not of serving young Rodney, at least of doing him no disservice. Whether Rodney Teele had ever had further communication with his daughter-in-law, I, of course, did not know. Nothing was ever heard of her — which might cut in either direction. That I was tacitly on the side of young Rodney and whatever belonged to him I am sure the old man knew; but he did not resent it. I sometimes wondered if that were not his only reason for keeping hold of me. I never quite believed that, however. I think his impulse was, rather, not to lose sight of an individual who possessed intimate information of the sort that I had packed away. I should have been quite willing to tell old Rodney the truth: that I had sought — and sought fruitlessly — for young Rodney's widow, as I had sought for Rodney himself before his death. Their obscurity was one of the cleverest and most difficult things I have ever known fate, assisted or unassisted, to achieve. I fancied they had been lost in some outlying slum or suburb, perhaps under another name. In any case, I knew less than nothing. If Rodney Teele knew anything, he kept it to himself.

The pretext for his occasional invitations — there was always a pretext, as if to guard against my assuming that far-off event to be fresh in his memory — was usually architectural discussion. I was beginning to work hard, but I was near enough to the bottom for it to be out of the question that Rodney Teele should consult me professionally. He liked to talk about the plans of the various buildings that he endowed — informally, as he would have talked to a friend. I do not think he ever asked me a technical question, or in any sense gave away his own architects. But we discussed the exteriors of hospitals and settlements and missionary offices — all that generation of edifices brought into being by Rodney Teele's wealth during the last years of his life. On one occasion he asked me to go with him while he inspected a newly opened and most scientific orphanage. He

used to walk quietly in, of an afternoon, to some institution he had backed, chat mildly with the authorities, do a little casual inspecting with the air of a sight-seer, and walk out again — keeping, all the time, his thoughts to himself. Such visits were duly recorded in the press, of course; but they were externally as little as possible like an official progress. I was sometimes his sole body-guard, and I know.

"The orphanage?" I answered, in reply to his suggestion. "Oh, yes, I should like to see it. But I wonder, sir, that orphans should be in your line."

The allusion was not so sharp as it sounds, for we had often discussed scientific philanthropy, and I knew some of his curious views.

"We must remember," said Rodney Teele in his soft voice, fainter and slightly more nasal than of old, "that the laws of heredity are becoming fixed for us. We know that a certain proportion of the offspring, even with a bad strain in one of the parents, can be saved. The charter of the asylum provides that they can receive no children both of whose parents are undesirable. The eugenic specialists are finding the institution a fruitful field for research. I may say that it will be a great help to the proper testing of the Mendelian law for human subjects." He smoothed his glove as we passed down the steps of his grim mansion. "And I have a great deal of money," he added irrelevantly.

No one, so far as I know, has ever seen Rodney Teele in what could be called a "human" mood. He was not as other men; and his geniality was no more deceiving than the mask the Chinese actor puts on in sight of the audience. More than ever, that afternoon, as we rolled through the crowded streets in the barricaded hush of his house, I felt the isolation of this man. I wondered privately if he kept his amenities, like his confidences, for God. Not the greatest expert of them all had ever been introduced, I believe, to Rodney Teele's philosophy of life; and to no one, I judged, had he disclosed the complete design of his philanthropy. They were all blind beneficiaries. I, certainly, was as bewildered as any one; only I got no pleasure out of the contemplation of

Rodney Teele. It did not flatter any secret democratic taint in me to see him walk up the steps of the main building of the asylum just as another man would have done. Yet I could not refuse him the little things he asked me.

This afternoon the superintendent was absent. It was hard on the superintendent, I thought privately. He would so have liked that brief chat in his own office with the great man — that nervous chat in which nothing sincere or significant could possibly be brought out. An assistant proffered the card-catalogue as an object of interest; but Rodney Teele waved him away.

"I should like to see some of the children — if they are not in school."

The head matron was summoned. For the little ones, it was the hour of recreation before supper. So we walked towards the scientific playground where earnest young women taught the little creatures the scientific way to play. The place was as clean as a hospital; elaborately subdivided, an intricate, bare labyrinth of the most modern description. I was not uninterested in the plans of the vast place; but it was only one of a thousand details in Rodney Teele's past, and he pushed on towards the playground, barely nodding at the matron's occasional outburst of rapture over arrangements for sanitation or comfort.

Presently we faced a crowd of fifty little creatures in a broad, sanded enclosure. The two young play-assistants scanned our group of three, whispered to each other, and went on ostentatiously guiding the games. The children seemed to be fearless, which comforted me. I do not like orphan asylums. They ran up, by twos and threes, to inspect us and smile at the head matron. They were always herded back into their games with elaborate gentleness by the play-assistants.

Rodney Teele stood on the lowest of the steps that led down into the playground, and folded his hands on his stick. He stared for a moment non-committally before him, over the heads of the children — a parti-colored group. It was one of the new

departures of this gilded institution that the children were not dressed alike. A little boy of three or four ran up to the matron to show her a toy pail. I should not have noticed the child except for the sudden flush that came over the woman's homely and dignified face. She beckoned one of the young women, whispered to her, and gave the boy into her charge, pointing to a distant sand-pile.

Just then Rodney Teele turned and saw the group. Perhaps he thought it time for another manipulation of the mask. At all events, he asked a question. "What is this little boy's name?"

The play-assistant answered promptly: "Teddy, sir. Come, Teddy, don't bother the gentleman." And she was for hastening him off.

But the child clung for a moment to the voluminous gray skirts of the matron and spoke shrilly.

"It isn't! It's Rodney Teele, Third. My mother told me so."

The matron rocked nervously where she stood. "It's 'known as Teddy Rouse' in the card-catalogue, sir." Her face had turned from red to pale. "But he was two years old when his mother died: we don't know what crazy things she may have said to him. Their parents come near being the ruin of us if they live too long. 'Teddy Rouse' it is, and Mrs. Rouse, they say she was called. She must have had her marriage certificate, or he wouldn't have been admitted. These things are all done perfectly right at the Home, as the superintendent could tell you if he was here. Teddy, go and play with Miss Bamberg."

And the child went, but not before I had had one sufficient look at him. The resemblance to young Rodney's wife was unmistakable: he had the same features, stamped, too, with the haunting, foreign look I had noticed that evening in old Rodney Teele's library. "Recessive to the dominant Teeles,"* I muttered to myself. Certainly, the child had no look of my classmate, and still less of the mandarin in ivory who stood at this moment beside me.

Rodney Teele said nothing. He raised his hand to

check the flow of the matron's apology: she stopped in the middle of a word. He did not glance after the retreating child; but I knew he had seen as well as I. If ten seconds had sufficed to me, they would have been more than enough for Rodney Teele. He turned his back on the playground and strode stiffly into the building. The superintendent had not returned when we reached the office, and we waited there only five minutes, while Mr. Teele talked with the assistant about some new Montessori outfits. The matron hovered limply in the background, and followed us to the door. Not a word was spoken about Teddy Rouse.

I need not have dreaded the drive home. It was my fate to enter into Rodney Teele's life at strange and crucial moments, and to emerge from them with no increased sense of fellowship with him. He always ignored immediately what we had just been through together, and the only proof I had of his remembering those hours was that he did not quite forget my existence. On this occasion, as well, no reference was made to the child we had seen. The only difference it had made was to bring to Rodney Teele's face the least perfunctory smile I had ever seen there — the smile of a man who has justified his ways. Without a lead from him, I could say nothing; and we drove home uncommunicatively, except for that speaking smile. He dropped me, courteously, at my own club, and went on. Through the window of the limousine, as the car turned, I could see his extraordinary face still mildly glowing. He never sent for me, after that, and I never saw him again.

It was a year after our visit to the orphan asylum that Rodney Teele died. His will was published in the papers, to the last inch of its great length. That stupendous storm of bequests broke over a stunned world, excluding for a day every other excitement. There was so much money ! Even Rodney Teele must have had hard work to dispose of it; but he had evidently toiled gallantly at his herculean task. He had at least kept his account with his Maker on an imperial scale. Again I was haunted by a sense of partnership — as if Rodney Teele had been the terrestrial member of the firm. But I kept my cynical reflections to myself. The date of the will lay somewhere between young Rodney's marriage and the

journey to Carlsbad, though there were plenty of charitable codicils since that date. Some of his financial associates were remembered, as well as outlying Teeles in obscure corners of the country. The usual things were done for servants. There was no mention of Teddy Rouse.

I peered into the future, wondering vaguely if I should ever be in a position to do anything for little Rodney Teele, Third. I hoped I should. But at the moment I could not afford to remove him from the institution where he was; and a brief interview with Rodney Teele's lawyer showed me that, in the circumstances, Rodney Teele's will could not be assailed for the child's benefit. There had been a sealed letter to his lawyers especially providing for that remote contingency. Rodney Teele had evidently not trusted me. I could only hold on and hope that sometime I might quietly take the boy away and look after him. It would not be a work of love — he did not look Uke Rodney; he looked only Uke all the things that had done for Rodney — ^but it might lay a few ghosts that seemed sometimes, to my forewarned ears, to be still treading the world.

The day never came, however. I used to visit the asylum occasionally, as a kind of carking duty. Always, in my mind, was the firm intention to withdraw Teddy Rouse as soon as my income should reach a certain figure, which I had fixed. At present Rodney Teele's grandchild was faring better on his casual crumb of Teele benevolence than I could guarantee his faring. It was some satisfaction to me to know, at least, that Teddy Rouse would, for a time, have been supported by his grandfather. Until I could do better, there was nothing for it but to go occasionally and carry him permitted gifts. I don't think the child ever grew fond of me — probably he never really had the chance. I hadn't much to say to him — then.

A few years after Rodney Teele's death, when I paid one of my periodic visits to the orphanage, I was informed that Teddy Rouse had run away. No trace of the boy was ever discovered: his evasion had been planned with a skill worthy of the Teeles. It is possible that, one of these days, we shall do homage

to some financial genius of undivulged origin, whose countenance an old man may quietly recognize. It may be that, meanwhile, the Teele brain is working somewhere in obscurity behind a face like a folk-song. But I doubt it. I think that little Teddy Rouse was a pure recessive, and that with his parents' untimely death the dominant strain was lost forever.



THE INSTITUT MIMI

From: **The Pleasant Ways Of St. Medard**

By Grace King (Henry Holt & Co, 1916)

Compared with the Ursuline convent, that is if earthly things can be compared to heavenly ones, Mademoiselle Mimi's school might have been called a small, a very small one. But she did not conduct it as such : she conducted it as if it were the great St. Denis of New Orleans, whose pattern, as its prospectus explained, was the great St. Denis of Paris.

Mademoiselle Mimi hardly could do otherwise, as she herself had been educated at the St. Denis of New Orleans and knew no other school; and as she said, she could follow only those examples that the good God had given her. Therefore, her scholars — ten or twenty, four or six, as the number might be — were called to order by the ringing of a bell at five minutes before nine in the morning, when all went down on their knees, crossed themselves, and recited the Pater,

The Salle d'etude, as it was called, was the dining room ; the forms were its chairs. The writing was done on the dining table in the center of which all the copy books were arranged in neat piles. Mademoiselle Mimi had no plantform but she sat as though she were on one, behind a little papier mache table that bore a papier mac he desk inlaid with mother of pearl (the old desk of her mother). And it must be confessed that the bell whose ringing ordered the hours of the school was

nothing better than a tiny porcelain trifle, shaped like a lily with a gilt pistil for clapper and a gilt stem for handle — a lamentable falling back indeed from the St. Denis standard.

The desk was by the window, and the classes stood before it to recite. When the scholars stood properly, it was credited to their account of good marks, as "maintien" when improperly, it was marked against them. In the St. Denis system, there was no doubt as to whether one knew one's lesson or not. One was given so many lines to learn by heart. If one could repeat the portion without a mistake, one knew it; if not, not. The system was as clear as the sun to the children, and exactly as one repeated the lesson one was marked in Mademoiselle Mimi's account-book which was kept as if it were to be produced in evidence on the last day. A "P," in red ink meant Perfect, the value of twelve good marks; every word missed took one mark from the possible twelve and when the whole credit was exhausted, one went into insolvency with a naught, or even a cross; a bad mark against one. At the end of the month, bankrupts in good marks were put at the foot of the class capitalists at the head; very much, so Mademoiselle Mimi might say, as God does in his school in the world. When one could not repeat the lesson, one was held not to have studied it.

"But, Mademoiselle Mimi, I have studied it; I assure you I have studied it!" one would cry.

"Ah! my child, if you had studied it, you would know it," was the just answer.

When one did not study at all, was in fact lazy and stupid, one received the fool's cap and was stood in the corner; and when one pretended not to mind this and played the impertinent "faisait Vimpertinent" in school language, by making grimaces and signs to the other scholars, then old Aglone was called in from the kitchen to pin a dish-cloth to one's tail-coat or frock. Ah! this hurt! This cut the pride and brought tears to the dryest-eyed masculine or feminine! The punishment did not belong to the original St. Denis system — ^it was an addition, or rather an innovation of Mademoiselle Mimi's — ^but it was one whose efficacy she knew by experience, for it was, from time immemorial, the punishment of cooks upon children who came into their kitchen and played

the impertinent there.

Heu! what child would enter, even under compulsion, upon an education if the true size of the undertaking was revealed to it from the first? If for instance, not merely Pelion was piled upon Ossa, but all the mountains of the world were piled, one upon the other, and the small toddler was conducted to the base and was told : " Now climb, my child, climb ! It is true you will never get to the top, but, no matter, climb away, and keep on climbing.* Is it not somewhat as if the mouse were told to engender the mountain?

But fortunately, the approaches to education are so cunningly concealed, so insidiously presented, that to the child, it seems only a question of a slate or a primer, today; the multiplication table, tomorrow; and before one knows it, the years gliding by like a snake in the grass, one is at the terrible junction, the Caudine forks of grammar. It was at this point of the height above them that Cicely and Polly were graded by Mademoiselle Mimi, and their first steps in the ascension were taken in learning to prepare their copy books — a most important step, this, to Mademoiselle Mimi, and one that meant influence upon the rest of their life. They were to take their quire of fool's cap — white or blue, the color was not important — to fold it leaf by leaf, press it down with Mademoiselle Mimi's pearl ruler (that went with the desk), cut it with her mother of pearl knife, and arrange the tops of the leaves into one " cahier" the bottoms into another. Mademoiselle Mimi, herself, sewed the leaves together, providing thread, needle, and thimble, every day for the purpose ; as Aglone provided dish-cloths for her more sinister function. Mademoiselle Mimi, then, with a tasteful combination of fine and coarse pens and red and black ink, wrote the titles: " Cahier de Verbesf' or " D' Analyse/' or " Synonymes," or " Composition/' or " Ragles," with date and name and flourishes between ; for she had as pretty a talent for ornamental penmanship as any daughter of the Convent — ^the fountain source in the community of this accomplishment. To impress her scholars with the importance of the cahier in education, to make an object lesson of it, though she was in the plains of ignorance as regards any such educational term, Mademoiselle Mimi would take her little candidates to the small bookcase secretaire in her bedroom, and opening the cabinet underneath, show them the cahiers of her school days. Every one was

there; not one was missing; from her first inchoate pot hooks and hangers to the dawn of the ornamental finishing aforementioned; showing the entire course from the first verb to the last composition on " Spring," " Birds," " Love of Parents," or " Duty to One's Neighbors," etc., etc. And there too, were her school books — all neatly covered with calico, as she exacted that those of her scholars should be,— class after class of books, for she had climbed to the topmost pinnacle of the St. Denis mountain.

It was as if a bank president should open his safe and show to an office boy his stored gold. This was her capital, her stock in trade. She taught her first books to her first scholars as she would be glad to teach her last ones to a graduate, should she ever have one.

" I will teach all that I have learned myself," she would frankly declare to her patrons. " I do not promise more, for I cannot do more."

Every Friday she read out the total of each one's good and bad marks for the week. On the last Friday of the month, she collected and redistributed her medals, hung on fresh ribbons ; the medals too being left from her own school days. And the same rule held sway in her institution as in St. Denis, and perhaps in the parental institution in Paris: the same scholar, the cleverest one, always obtained the medal, month after month; and the lazy, stupid ones, — ^never, no matter how much more glorious the achievement would have been for them.

Every day, a verb, a sum in arithmetic, a French and an English dictation, a paragraph of grammar, French and English; so climbed they at the Institut Mimi. Histoire Sainte, Histoire Generale, every other day. Geography, once a week. Friday, recitation of fables and poetry, writing of letters, compositions and " Compliments," in their season.

Complements. That was the ke)mote of the school from every September to January: greetings to the parents on New Year's day. Those who could not write had to learn theirs by heart: " Mon cher Papa/' "Ma

chire Maman, void le jour de Van," . . . with the proper bow or courtesy. Those who could write, prepared their surprises on notepaper, scoloped along the edge, with a little pink rose stamped at the top. Instead of four, six months of Fridays would not have been too much preparation, so difficult are the bows and courtesies, the capitals and spelling of these compliments. It is well that the parents are invariably delighted and surprised with such greetings, otherwise, the time and trouble and the tears shed over them would not have been worth while.

At twelve o'clock came recreation and lunch ; at three, prayer again, and the last farewell tinkle of the porcelain bell.

Monsieur Pinseau, or " Papa Pinseau," as the children called him, sitting, if it were cold, in the next room — if it were warm, on the gallery — could overhear it all. Sometimes, he had the French paper UAbaille to read, sometimes an American paper. Mademoiselle Mimi always provided him with the one or the other. She could see, however, that they interested him but little. He would stop any time on a European despatch if Belle put her head on his knee; and he would turn from the sheet a half dozen times in the morning at the twitching of a leaf outside the window, or to look for the two dear little heads of his friends, the pair of lizards that dwelt in the vines there. By raising his eyes, he could see, on the low whitewashed walls, the portraits of his mother and father ; she, serious and dignified in a turban and muslin kerchief, he, sedate and shrewd, in a high stock and black toupet The portraits of the parents of his wife hung in his daughter's room. Strange to say, the mother of that rigid saint was painted in the costume of the frivolous world, not decolleeiee merely, but decorsetee also, and her father showed in his face no sentiment for the ascetic at all.

Sometimes, while the old gentleman was simken in reflection, perhaps on this very theme, past distraction by Belle or the lizards or vague thoughts about his flowers, there would come a little touch upon his elbow and a timid voice to his ear : " Monsieur Pinseau, Mademoiselle Mimi votis fait dire comme ga , . ," and he, too, would have to put his hand to the climbing. Because, if the day was ugly (for every now and then there does come an ugly day in New Orleans when the sky is as dark and the rain as pitilessly monotonous as anywhere else)

Mademoiselle Mimi would say to herself : " Poor Papa, on such a day as this, what sad thoughts he must have ! " and she would call up a little scholar and send her to Papa Pinseau to ask him to hear her fable. And if the day were fine, the sky blue, the sun radiant, the earth gay. Mademoiselle Mimi would think : " Poor Papa, how sad he must be on such a beautiful day as this." And she would send some little scholar with her reading lesson from Telemaque. The reading lesson was always from Telemaque and the poetry from La Fontaine's fables; for one could not ascend any educational height whatever without them in Mademoiselle Mimi's opinion.

" Holy, blessed Virgin ! " old Aglone would mutter to herself in the kitchen, " look at that; and you know how he used to hate children ! "

The little girls (little girls have a keener sense of humor than little boys), when they would come in '^ La Cigale et la Fourmi " to the conversation :

*Que faisiez vous au temps chaudf
Nuit et jour a tout venant,
Je chantais, ne vous deplaise
Vous chantiez? J'en suis fort aise.
Eh bien, dansez maintenant!"*

When they came to that they would throw back their heads and laugh, showing all their little white teeth; it was always so new and funny to them. But poor Papa Pinseau, he did not laugh. That fable was no longer funny to him.

The children who had no piano, who, plainly speaking, were too poor to have one, practised on Mademoiselle Mimi's instrument after school hours; and those who lived near enough went in addition on Saturdays, when Mademoiselle Mimi was herself, practising at the church or giving lessons to the Demoiselles San Antonio.

To go on Saturday, was equivalent to having a lesson from Papa Pinseau who, of course, was always at home, and could no more refrain from meddling with the music than with the cooking in his daughter's absence. And when Mademoiselle Mimi would come through the gate after her morning tasks and would pause a minute to listen to the practising, as music teachers do mechanically

even when walking in the street by strange houses, she would hear the scales and five finger exercises being played with as much sentiment of touch, as if they were a "divertissement".

And although he knew, naturally, no more about the technique of fingering than of pots and pans, if she glanced through the shutters of the window as likely as not, she saw the picture of an old gentleman bending over the pianist, showing her exactly how the wrist should be raised and the little pink palm turned to the best advantage of the musician — if not of the music — and how the fingers may be used to the least detriment of the finger-nails which, on ladies, he would say, should be long, oval, and perfectly transparent; as if he were saying her soul should be perfectly pure.

"What is not done gracefully. Mademoiselle, it is not worth while for ladies to do at all."

Mademoiselle Mimi did not need to listen to hear these words any more than she needed to listen to hear the church bell.

"Eh, Papa !" she would say to him sometimes in her dismay. "The scales and the five-finger exercises ; they are not given to us to make us more attractive, any more than the Ten Commandments are." Sometimes when the New Year's compliments were being prepared, she would be forced by other occupations to confide the rehearsal of them to him, for when the compliments are once started in motion they must be recited or copied every day with the regularity of one's prayer. It is really only their importance that constituted their difficulty; but it is strange, how in copying or reciting them the embarrassment becomes more and more extreme with the approach of the great day they are to honor; how one trips over the most familiar words, and stumbles over the shortest sentences ; and how on the very last day one is just as apt to make the same fault that one started with on the first. And over these failures, what bitter tears can be shed ! What depths of anguish sounded by boys and girls alike, neither sex having any advantage over the other in the endurance of shame !

Fortunate it was for the little girls at least, that there was a Papa Pinseau to replace Mademoiselle Mimi, on her Saturday morning absences which may have been

prolonged not involuntarily; for if she prided herself on teaching only what she had learned, how could she teach the little girls to step forward and courtesy and smile and look the proper way — not to speak of the little boys — she who had been taught dancing by a pietist, recommended by her mother's confessor, a lady whose only grace was her piety.

With Papa Pinseau it was different ! He knew exactly how the little ones should walk up to the expectant, surprised parent, — the chief attraction of the compliment to the little ones was the perfect surprise they caused year after year, — how they should courtesy, how lift the hand — ^palm outward, and then as a climax, the eyes. When he had a good subject, he produced charming results, results entirely beyond the power, because entirely beyond the character, of his daughter.

The little boys ran off from their rehearsals as soon as possible; but the little girls — Ah! how wise was Mr. Talbot in his judgment — would hang around him as if fascinated; seeing which, he would fascinate them yet more, just as he used to do with those other little girls, the young ladies of his day. Everything he did pleased them, anything he said amused them. When Made-moiselle, as a reward for good behavior, would offer to tell a story of her scholars' own choosing, the little girls would cry out unanimously : " Ask Papa Pinseau to tell us about when he was little, and how he went to dancing-school ! "

His dancing school was a kind of fairyland to them, for as they understood it, the pretty manners of the ladies and gentlemen of his day came from the pretty manners taught in the dancing-school by an old gentleman who was a French nobleman, an emigre, who had been noted for his dancing at the court of Marie Antoinette. (The little girls would shake their heads in solemn awe at this and repeat " the court of Marie Antoinette.") He gave his lessons in an old court dress with silk stockings and morocco pumps. Another old nobleman played the violin for him. They lived together in a little room on Toulouse Street, and their Salle de danse was in Royal Street, over a confectionery. All the little boys and girls of good family went to him. The old dancing-master was very particular about the parentage and the feet of his scholars. The little girls must have their slippers made by an old woman on Chartres Street, the

boys, by the famous Larose, himself. . . .

When he was a young man. Monsieur Pinseau was noted for his witty talent of mimicry, and there was nothing he did better or more delightfully than the old dancing-master and the violinist, the little boys in their pumps and wide trousers, and the little girls, long pantalettes and all. Poor Papa Pinseau! his feet were gouty and heavy enough now and he wore carpet slippers, bought at the cheapest shop at the Louisa Street market.

. . . When the old dancing-master died (now the story became thrilling to the little girls) and his obituary notices were posted on the corners of the streets, so many high-sounding names appeared in it (the confectioner did this) that the whole city became confused and embarrassed over it, and everybody insisted upon going to the funeral at the Cathedral. The little Pinseau was taken by his nurse and made to look upon the old dancing-master in his coffin (there is nothing a nurse likes better than such surreptitious enjoyment of forbidden fruit), and he was all surprised to find him, in spite of his great names, still the same little, yellow-wrinkled tyrant of a dancing-master, dressed in the same old knee breeches and darned stockings and pumps with silver buckles. The little boys of the dancing-school followed the hearse dressed as if for their dancing lesson, each one carrying a bouquet (always a sigh of regret followed this termination of the tale).

It was the old Marquis who taught the ladies of New Orleans how much prettier it was to dance with their eyes cast down. The ex-ballet-dancer who succeeded him could teach only like a ballet-dancer, and the ladies of New Orleans only then began to throw their heads back in dancing and show their eyes as they did their feet; (so ran the warning moral of the tale — ^at which the little girls would cast down their heads and eyes at once).

Mr. Talbot knew nothing, and even less than nothing, of all this. A point of variance had developed between him and Mademoiselle Mimi. After careful examination, he had rejected the histories she taught, although they were written by learned priests, were recommended by Monseigneur the Archbishop, and were, therefore, taught in all schools of the State where religion had any authority. This time he did not intrust any mes-

sages to his wife, but told Mademoiselle Mimi, himself, what he had to say about her histories; and she, — it was all she could do, — ^promised to teach Protestant histories if he desired.

" Protestant histories, Madam ! History is history. There is no such thing as Roman Catholic history or Protestant history! Any more than there is Roman Catholic arithmetic or Protestant arithmetic, et tutti quanta . . '

She listened to him attentively and seemed to be convinced, but the truth was, being a woman, she disliked lectures and followed his words only sufficiently to know when to place what she had made up her mind, at once, to say to him : " Far from not wanting to act according to your desires, I, on the contrary, shall be only too happy to follow your views on the subject. I beg you to select the histories yourself, that you should like your daughters taught, and I shall teach them. Indeed I consider it a great privilege to have a gentleman of your education to direct me,'* etc., etc.

When she returned home, however, manifold difficulties presented themselves in the way of her fulfilling her promise. She had scruples of conscience on the subject, for to be on the good side of the priests and the sisters at the convent, omnipotent secular as well as clerical authorities in the parish, she had asked and followed their advice about text-books and they, somewhat like the American gentleman, were most firm in their ideas about history.

" In truth,*' she confided to her father, " I must, it seems, teach two histories on the same subject. But the very beginning of all histories for small children impresses the belief that there is but one history, and that the one taught is the right one! And we are especially urged to warn them against the other kind, — the false histories which poison the mind and corrupt the truth. How can I in one class teach that Luther was a monster, sent by the devil, a false priest; and in another that he was . . . what I will not repeat — ^all that Mr. Talbot believes about him; to one child, that it was God who gained the battle of Tolbiac, and to another that it wasn't? He objects to that particularly; he cited the battle of Tolbiac himself. Oh, about miracles he was most eloquent. He says that he does not want his

children taught that there are such things as miracles in history. But if miracles have happened, what are we going to do about them? Deny them? Ah! It was to the very people that denied them that the miracles came ; the pagans, the blasphemers. How could they ever have been converted without miracles? It may be a difficulty for a man to believe them, but," with a covert reference to her father's indifference to religion, " for a woman, I assure you nothing seems so natural as a miracle."

Fortunately, Papa Pinseau had no such scruples, having very little religion. Instead of seeing one right side in every historical question in which he had figured — ^that is in every political question — ^he had seen as many right sides as it was as profitable to as many men to adopt. The right side was the side that got most votes in the ballot-box, that was all — and the men in one campaign would vote for one right side, and in the next for another. Constancy and consistency he had found to be as rare in history as in love. So he was well qualified to become Professor of American History, as the children called history written in English, in the Institut Mimi. He conducted his class of two with, at least, irreproachable tact and grace ; and as difficult situations had always been infinitely attractive to him, he did not shun, as Mademoiselle would have done, naive questions when the lesson was over

" In history, the great men are the good men, eh, Monsieur Pinseau ? "

" And the beautiful women are the good women, eh. Monsieur Pinseau ? "

"And when a man is good, he is always great, eh. Monsieur Pinseau ? "

" Unless he is a great fool," would answer Monsieur Pinseau.

" And if a man is good, his enemies have to be bad, eh, Monsieur Pinseau? "

" Oh, yes, the enemies of good people are always the bad people," he would answer placidly.



FADE IN

By Mildred Cram

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New York was too small for Pug Fairchild. It was not broad enough, deep enough, long enough, or thick enough through. Pug was young, and he needed room for action. He came back from Boston with an engineer's degree in his pocket and the whole wide world before him. Naturally New York didn't go very far. Pug had the young American habit of jumping through hoops—every hoop a new pleasure—without so much as stubbing his toe. "New York's all right," he told his dad, "but there's nothing much to do!"

"New York's all right," he told his dad, "but there's nothing much to do!"

"Whatever there is to do," his father said, "do it. Then come back to me and we'll talk over the business of life."

They shook hands solemnly, and Pug pranced out into the big city looking for action. He got it. You see, he had an inexhaustible thirst for life—not life as most men think it is, but life as Pug wanted to live it. If he encountered a new emotion, he took it apart and examined the wheels.

If some one puzzled him—a bum, a waiter, a philosopher, or a woman—he always satisfied his curiosity. It wasn't enough to ride in the subway; he wanted to know who thought of it to begin with, who built it, and who ran it. He was as exhaustless as a terrier. It was never too much trouble to find out the most hidden springs of vitality, the very sources of energy.

"Your son has St. Vitus' dance," some one told Pug's dad.

"Not at all," the old man answered with a smile;

“he has the punch. Just now his style is cramped. When he has exhausted New York, I shall open the door into the wide world and show him out—there isn’t room for him here.”

“Then you will lose him.”

Pug's father shook his head and looked across the top of his mahogany desk, through the plate glass windows of his expensive downtown office, beyond the crowding towers and pinnacles of the city to the open harbour. There was a shadow of wistful longing in his eyes. “I’d rather lose him,” he said, “than put him in chains. God save us! Most of us believe that youth has to be disciplined. It’s the mean envy of middle age and senility. When we’re tired, disillusioned, stale as flat champagne, we take it out on the youngsters. Lecture ‘em! Advise ‘em! Curb ‘em! Show ‘em the straight and narrow path before they have learned to walk at all. No, sir! I have explained the elementary moralities to Pug. He can distinguish the sound, same music of ‘thou shalt not in the bleating of the market place. I am not afraid of him. St. Vitus’ dance? Lord bless me— he hasn’t room to swing his arms!”

Pug was doing his best. He had a smile that kindled smiles wherever he went. Glum faces broke into responsive grins as he swung down Fifth Avenue or galloped along Broadway. He left a trail of good humour behind him as an impetuous young comet snaps a whip of sparks ‘across a dark sky. He was glad to be alive because he did not believe in failure any more than he believed in faries, because every one liked him, and because the world was so full of a number of things. He tackled New York with the glee of an undefeated lightweight—pawing the ring and scrapping good-naturedly for the fun of the thing. If any one tried to hurt him, he tripped him up, sat on his chest, and tickled him until he cried for help.

“There are lots of things to learn,” he told his dad one morning at breakfast. “New York has more up its sleeve than I imagined.”

But Pug's dad scarcely glanced up from the editorial page of the “Times”. He shrugged his shoulders slightly, gave the paper an embarrassed shake, and said: “Let me know when you’ve had enough.”

Pug laughed. "It takes an awful lot," he answered, "to tire me out."

Mr. Fairchild put the "Times" down and stared over his glasses at Pug. What he saw reassured him—Pug's spontaneous smile, his sleek cap of smooth brown hair, his serious eyes. They looked at each other gravely for a moment. Pug had one-stepped through the parental door very early that morning, and there was a dull headache behind his serious eyes. But his hands were steady and his smile was as joyous as ever. He waited, with an unsteady feeling round his heart, while his father's eyes rested on him with a look that was both quizzical and affectionate. Then he laughed, striking the answering shout in his dad, as he knew he would.

"Dad," he said devoutly, "you're a wonderful sport."

Yes, Pug was doing his best to jump through all the hoops. He tired New York out long before he lost his own breath. He danced on every polished hardwood floor between Harlem and the Battery. He knew every head waiter, every talented mixer of delectable concoctions, every maitre d'hôtel in town. He understood the subtle technique of reserving tables and tipping restaurant potentates. He had a nodding acquaintance with box-office tyrants, and knew how to smile his way into theatres. He had the enviable privilege of taking certain lovely follies out to supper, perhaps because he never made love to them and understood the peculiar patois of Broadway. He had been drunk in a variety of ways, and had always landed on his feet. He had driven a taxi halfway up the steps of the Public Library. He had gambled; he had flashed in and out of a dozen studios where he had heard good, bad, and indifferent talk; he had listened to serious music and had liked it; he had absorbed American ragtime through the soles of his feet, and he liked that, too. He laughed his way into New York society, into Greenwich Village, into smart clubs. You couldn't tire him out; he was never bored. He blew into New York like a fresh west wind. By the time he had breezed halfway through his Manhattan education he had become a tornado, a synonym for zip, pepper, punch—whatever it is one calls the zest of youth. He never stopped for

breath except when he took a Turkish bath or went actually to bed.

"Well," his dad said, when he caught sight of him again one morning at breakfast, "there seems nothing left in the way of speed except a racing car and an aeroplane. I'll give you both."

Pug laughed. "How about the business of life?"

"Tired Out?"

"No, sir. Only—"

"Only what?" -

"I've used up New York. I think I've played on all the instruments except the big bass drum. I don't want a racing car or an aeroplane. I want a job."

Then Pug's father leaned back in his chair and laughed until the tears rolled down his cheeks. His laugh was an imitation; the tears were not. He wiped them away with a big fresh linen handkerchief and leaned across the table to put his hand on Pug's shoulder. They stared at each other solemnly, for they were sentimental men, sentimental in the good old American way. Pug felt his heart beating; he was as ardent as a knight at the altar of consecration. His dad held the sword with which he would attack the world—the mysterious, beautiful, powerful "job", the investiture of manhood and accomplishment.

"I mean it," he said in a broken voice. "I know this pleasure game. I've turned it inside out—and the lining's yellow. I want to work. I think it's time." Suddenly his face straightened into sober lines and he clenched his fists. "Oh, dad, give me room to swing my arms!"

Mr. Fairchild got up very abruptly and went to the window. He looked down into the quiet, well-groomed East Side street where he had erected his own particular little pedestal of wealth, position, and success, and the thought flashed through his mind that Pug had no conception of what the struggle meant, what it had to be. He had tossed just such youth as Pug's into the battle with New York. What had he won? This house, a bank account—discipline. He had forgotten how to laugh; he felt his soul within him as dry as a bean in a pod—disciplined out of all semblance to a soul. He remembered what denials had

gone into the making of his power, such as it was. He had wanted romance and had turned his back on it. Other men had gone down the world while he sat at his mahogany desk watching the ships drift out of the harbour into the open sea. He had dreamed of adventure, and had worn a groove in the city asphalt between Bowling Green and East Thirty-fifth Street. He had longed for colour, for the warmth of human experience, for open skies, the exultation of God's world—and what had he had? In a voice he scarcely recognized as his own, he asked Pug: "How would you like to go to Magella?"

Pug shouted. "Magella! Oh, great!"

"They're putting a new railway from the Santa Christina to the Marias. Bianchi is having trouble with the Magellans. They don't want it—not an American railway, at any rate. I could send you down. Only there mustn't be a failure."

Pug's voice was solemn. "Failure. Oh, dad, why in Heaven's name didn't you send me before? There's trouble down there, and I've been playing tiddledy-winks on Broadway!" He put his head in his hands and groaned. "Magella! Why, I've wanted to go there ever since I was a kid."

"Yes," his dad said gravely, "so have I. You can go. That is, if you're ready for a scrap."

Pug jumped up. "I'm ready," he shouted.

"Now?"

"This minute!"

They laughed, and Pug's dad put his arm around the boy's shoulder. "There's a steamer on Saturday that will take you as far as Panama. From there you'll have to wait your luck on board a coasting steamer, unless you happen to catch one of the company's boats. Come into the library and I'll explain."

Pug knew the big map that hung behind his dad's desk in the library; he knew every irregularity in the Magellan coast line, every river, every mountain peak, every town. The city of Magella itself was, in Pug's mind, a big black star halfway down the map. Behind it, irregular, crêpy lines marked the vast, crowding peaks of the Santa Christina. But Mr. Fairchild saw more than a black star and the shadowy thumb print of mountain ranges; Magella was the source of his

wealth, his hobby, his fetish, perhaps his religion. He had dreamed for twenty years of the little city's sun-baked streets and stuccoed arcades; at his mahogany desk, fifteen stories or so above Bowling Green, he had played with Magella's financial and political destiny, a monarch who had never set foot in his kingdom. Presidents came and went in Magella; dictators strutted, fought, died; revolutions swept across the little republic like acrid clouds of dust spinning before a sudden wind—yet an endless stream of gold poured down from Santa Christina to the sea-board, American gold, mined by Americans and shipped eventually to American ports. It was the business of Pug's dad to see that nothing stopped that flow of gold—hate, fury, envy, or ambition. Magella hated Pug's dad with a concentrated, childish hatred that led to frequent tantrums; now and then Magella, deprived of its gold, lay down on its face, kicked its heels, and howled. Then there were secret killings; shots were fired in the streets; the American Consulate was spattered with mud and showered with stones. And Pug's dad, at his mahogany desk in Bowling Green, saw to it that the golden stream rolled steadily down to the coast and into the company's ships waiting for it there.

He put his finger on the black star and turned to Pug with a quiet smile. "There's Magella. Here are the Columbia mines, up in the Santa Christina. Bianchi's railway runs only so far. From this point all the hauling is done by rope-haul, slow, and old-fashioned. We are going to run the new road clear across this valley and up into the lower flanks of the Marias, where the new mines are. Now, Pug, listen to me. We sent one man down there and he failed. The Magellans got him—literally, I mean."

Pug's eyes flashed. "You mean they shot him?"

"Something like that. At any rate, he's dead.

This isn't an easy job. You've got to conquer the Magellans first and the mountains afterward.

The men are down there waiting for orders from me—two or three young fellows like yourself, good engineers, but not willing to take the initiative.

I can't guarantee their safety, you see. I'm going to send you down there because I think you'll

find room to swing your arms. Is it a go?"

Pug made a gesture of acceptance that was a tirade of ecstasy. He had no words. "Is it a go?" was all he managed to say. "Watch me!"

"Then sit down here," his dad said gravely, "and I'll tell you what I expect you to do."

An hour later Pug ran down the steps of his East Thirty-fifth Street home and sprinted northward to West Fifty-seventh, pushing New York out of his way with both elbows. There was a girl— He explained breathlessly to her manservant that he had to see her, and she came down into the shadowy drawing room, rather puzzled, very much flattered, a little afraid because it was just possible that he might be drunk. But he wasn't; he was the same Pug, incomparably fresh, alert, buoyant, and foolish. He snatched her hands and kissed them, not with passion, but with pleasure, because he was happy and because she had charming hands.

"Hello!" he said. "I've come to say good-by."

"Good-by? Where on earth are you going?"

"To Magella. Will you come with me?"

She was a nice girl, and she had been in love with Pug for a year. They had danced together, they had played hide-and-seek in the modern conservatory of passion, dodging reality like a light-hearted dryad and a faun. She looked into his laughing eyes. Pug's smile was infectious, irresponsible, as artless as a child's. "Go with you?" she repeated, feeling her heart leap unexpectedly.

"What do you mean, Pug?"

Pug put his hands on her slender shoulders and answered seriously: "I wish you'd marry me— today, tomorrow. I'm going on Saturday. I'm fond of you. Crazy about you. You dance better than any girl I know. You're plucky. I don't believe you've got any nerves. I want you like the very deuce. Will you come?"

She shook her head slowly, looking at him with steady eyes. She liked his smooth cheeks and the black line of his brows and the way his hair grew on his head. She liked his manners and his smile. She had never stopped to look into his heart or to be curious about his mind. Pug was a dear boy, erratic, wild, and lovable. She wanted very much to marry him, but she did not approve of him. Sparring for time, she asked:

"Where is Magella?"

"In South America. Great! Funny little town—dusty streets—arcades—hot as the very devil—cocoanut palms—You know! A sort of Richard Harding Davis place!"

"Is there anything to do?"

"Nothing much. I'm going to build a railway. A big job. You'll see. Say you'll come! I'm crazy about you. Honest to goodness, I never thought about marrying any one until I saw you. Do you remember the first time? You were skating on the lake at Tuxedo and I fell in love with you right off the bat. Answer me—are you coming to Magella on Saturday?"

She drew away from him a little. "Oh, Pug, I can't."

"Why not? Don't you love me?"

"Oh, yes, I do! Every one does. I couldn't help loving you, old dear. It isn't that."

"Well?"

"Let go of my hands, and I'll tell you."

"No, I'll keep your hands."

She shook her head again. "You're spoiled, Pug. You have always had everything you wanted, everything you asked for, everything you dreamed of. People have petted you, loved you, flattered you. It hasn't been good for you."

"Why not?"

"Don't you see? You aren't exactly trust worthy, Pug. You drink and smoke too much. You gamble. You aren't serious about anything."

"Why on earth should I be?"

"Oh, Pug!"

Suddenly he dropped her hands and his brows met in a puzzled frown. "What's the idea?" he demanded. "What, specifically, is the idea?" She just happened to be serious—a girl who believed profoundly in virtues that bored her. She was afraid, not for Pug, but for herself. Magella and the narrow, dusty streets had nothing in common with her familiar world—Fifth Avenue and Tuxedo, bright lights, gay voices, soft fabrics, and the glitter of jewels. She shivered when she thought of herself alone with Pug under a dark sky full of blazing stars. She was used to an audience. Pug in New York was one thing; Pug in Magella was another. Yet she wanted him. Just for a moment she longed passionately for the cour-

age to go away with him to that dirty, lazy, dusty little city in South America. It would be romantic, if she dared—if she dared to face the silence and mystery of love with him. Well, she didn't dare ! Suddenly she put her arms around him and looked into his puzzled eyes.

"I'll wait for you. Forever, if you say. But I can't go. You've got to make a man of your self, Pug Fairchild, and make me respect you. Just loving you isn't enough. I'm not sure that you would take life seriously, or, for that matter, marriage—or me! Every one in New York thinks that you are an adorable good-for-nothing who will never do anything worth while. You know, having speed isn't a guaranty of manliness. You've got speed, all right, Pug dear! You go faster than any one on earth, but I want you to go further—I want you to go all the way."

"Before you marry me?"

She nodded, her eyes on his face. She could not remember ever having seen Pug serious, and it frightened her a little. He was tense in the circle of her arms, almost hostile, as if his boyishness had vanished with his smile. She fancied for a moment that he was steeling himself for her sake, and she said again: "I want you to go all the way to success. Then I'll marry you. Make good, Pug dear, and come back to me."

He caught her hands suddenly and grinned.

"You aren't serious, are you?"

Just for a moment her Smile struggled to break through and upset all her little convictions. It was not easy to resist Pug. And it suddenly occurred to her that in resisting him she was doing him an enormous amount of good. No one had ever seriously interfered with Pug's conception of happiness, which was simply to enjoy doing any thing at all. He never cried for the moon since he was so amused by the world. Because she was a nice girl with a throwback to Puritanism, she felt that she would be safer with a disciplined Pug, a Pug deprived of curiosity, a Pug who had learned all the lessons of life. It was a part of her philosophy to distrust happiness and to suspect the light-hearted of being careless. She had never disciplined herself, but she longed to discipline Pug, whose gaiety had always frightened her. Yet she was distractingly pretty, and knew

it, and she wanted Pug, chastened or unchastened, at her feet. -

"I'm perfectly serious," she said. "I can't marry you until—well, until you grow up. You're such a kid, Pug, old dear."

He dropped her hands and walked away from her to the window. Standing there, with his hands in his pockets, he said thoughtfully: "Think of all the fun you're missing, Rita ! You are tossing away the gift of the gods."

"You mean you won't come back?"

He swung around and rushed across the room to stand before her, eager, very much in earnest, persuasive. "What do you mean by making good? Putting the railway over? I'll do that. Earning a fortune of my own? I'll do that, too! Glory be to God, Rita, it isn't having things that brings happiness—it's getting them. Put on your hat and we'll get married."

Very neatly she tripped him with his own plea.

"If getting things is what makes you happy, go down to Magella and—get me!"

Pug shook his head and stared at her solemnly as if he were seeing her for the first time. "Love has got to be team-work," he said. "I'm sorry, Rita—you and I could have had such a bully time, scrapping it out."

"It won't do you any harm to be unhappy, Pug."

He caught her hand suddenly and shook it. And his smile flashed out again, irrepressible, effervescent, irresistible. "Good-by, Rita ! I can't be unhappy, even for you. I'm a lost soul. I enjoy life. I expect I'm going to until the end of time."

"I'm sorry," she said in a sepulchral voice.

But he was gone.

So that is why Pug Fairchild went to Magella alone. The big fruit steamer that took him as far as Panama backed away from the East River dock and turned into the harbour, leaving Pug's dad on shore, waving his hat and smiling bravely. Pug watched until the little figure on the dock was lost altogether, excusing the tears in his eyes by saying aloud to a surprised deck steward that it hurt like the deuce to say good-by to America. The steward, who was Haitian, wept a tear or two himself. Behind them a dazzling path of foam

still linked the ship to New York, and Pug stared solemnly at the heaped, cubistic skyscrapers, the myriad plumes of white steam, the lacy bridges spanning the crowded river, the shuttlecock ferry boats black with crowds, the mad, terrible, magnificent activity of the greatest city in the world. It was there, just a step or two away, and he was leaving it—leaving the crowded streets and pretty girls, the dear old restaurants, the funny old bums, the L, roaring and straddling like a ridiculous dragon centipede from the Battery to the Harlem River; he was leaving the bright lobbies of his favourite theatres and the bright smiles of his favourite actresses, his club and that chair by the plate-glass window facing Fifth Avenue; he was leaving the syncopated thumps and gurgles of the jazz band at Reisenweber's, the scented brilliance of the Crystal room, the fury and gayety of the Cascades; he was going away from the poetry of Fifth Avenue at dusk, the brushing of elbows with celebrities, the intoxication of civilization out for a stroll, the odour of good cigars, perfumes, flowers, and gasoline; he was leaving the delicious satisfaction of big, dark concert halls and the electric pleasure of symphony orchestras and great voices; he was leaving that dad of his and the girl who danced like a breath, whose eyes were audacious and whose heart had eluded him; the girl who spoke their common language, the young American language of clipped syllables and slang, but to whom he had not made himself clear. Well, he would show her.

Pug snatched off his hat and waved it at the retreating city of towers and gilded spires. Its voice was already drowned out by the boisterous hiss of the sea against the big ship's sides. New York was slipping down behind the horizon, a toy city full of toy figures. Before Pug the world loomed like a new intoxication, a four-ringed circus. Already he could swing his arms. He did, much to the Haitian deck steward's joy. He shouted aloud, took a deep breath, and challenged the world to come on.

Back in New York Pug's dad had left the East River dock with slow, reluctant steps, and had gone back to his office in Bowling Green. He sat at the mahogany desk and gazed out of the lofty windows at the harbour. Pug had gone to the

colourful land of his dad's dreams, and New York was as silent, as quiet, as forlorn as a city of the dead.

"Make good, Pug," he whispered, "make good. You've got it in you. Only don't yell for help when you're in a tight place. And laugh, boy, laugh!"

The fruit steamer drifted into Panama, one golden dawn, and Pug rushed ashore to find that the company's steamer had left the day before, being no respecter of persons, least of all director's son. Pug had to take the *Libertà*, a wheezing old scow that chugged along the seaboard on irregular schedules, sometimes bringing up at Magella if her engines held out that long. She left Panama at dusk, bearing Pug and a swarm of Magellans. Pug wandered up and down the cluttered decks watching these men who hated his dad and opposed the building of the new railway to the Marias. They were a swarthy lot, very volatile, slender, darkly handsome. They had surrendered themselves to the *Libertà*'s caprices and sprawled on the decks, playing cards, gossiping, quarreling, howling sentimental songs at the rising moon. Racially they were a mixed lot—Italians, Indians, Spanish, low-caste Portuguese; there wasn't a pure-blooded Magellan among them. Three men, who might have belonged to the upper classes, stood a little apart from the noisy crowd on the deck. They were well-dressed, wearing the double-breasted blue serge clothes, very neat and correct, affected by Neapolitans and Sicilians. One of them, taller than the others, dominated the conglomerate Magellans on board the *Libertà*. He was sullen, lazy, as arrogant as an undefeated tyrant. He had a petulant mouth, a hostile stare, a high, well-modulated voice. Like most Magellans, he spoke Italian, fiery, impassioned, rapid as a machine gun. When he spoke the eyes of all the men within hearing turned in his direction.

Pug was curious. He waylaid the cabin boy and asked pleasantly: "Who's the fire eater in the straw hat? Is he the little tin god of Magella? Or is he the political matinee idol? I burn to know."

The cabin boy sidled away. "He is Carlo Gonelli. If he takes a fancy to hate you, you will

burn no longer, one way or the other.”

Pug laughed and circled the deck again. Dusk had deepened into night, and the asthmatic Liberta churned slowly across a sea as calm as a garden pool. The moon was high and as white as crystal. A low murmur of voices rose from the decks, and here and there, among the groups of squatting Magellans, cigarettes glowed for an instant and went out like blinking eyes. It was poetic and confounded lonely. If Rita had been there— what fun to lean on the rail and look out over the sea and whisper together.

“Excuse me,” some one said in English, “can you give me a light?”

Pug swung around. Gonelli was waiting unobtrusively, a cigarette between his fingers, a smile on his lips. He nodded and leaned down to Pug's match slowly, like a man accustomed to courtesy.

“You are going to Magella?” he asked.

“Please God,” Pug answered.

The Italian straightened up, and the two stood side by side, watching each other in the clear, bright moonlight. “No one but God will be pleased,” Gonelli said presently. “There are already too many Americans in Magella. Are you by any chance an engineer?”

“No,” said Pug, “I'm a toreador.”

“I have my answer! I see we should know more of one another. My name is Carlo Gonelli, and I come from Magella.”

“And my name,” said Pug politely, “is Pug, New York.” -

Gonelli Smiled. “Signor Pug,” he said, “if you are a good swimmer, I advise you to jump over board and return to Panama. The atmosphere of Magella is peculiarly unsuited to men of your temperament. Perhaps you don't know that the Marias mines belong to Magella. In holding them for Magella her leaders have in mind the future of the whole country. It is enough for you Americans to work the Columbia mines. The Magellans have watched that whole proceeding with singular patience. Old Bianchi was the first prospector to cross the cañon by way of the new trail. He organized the present company, raised the capital, built the little railway as far as the brink of the cañon, has grown very rich. Bene! The Magellans are willing to suffer the passing of all that

wealth into American hands. They have endured the presence of American labour in Magella with commendable good nature. The Columbia mines are American. We submit. We bow our heads. We are ashamed. We cannot alter the fact that American money paid for the shafts and tunnels. Bianchi betrayed his country. For that we will never forgive him.”

Gonelli tossed his cigarette over the rail, put his hands into the pockets of his neat serge coat and rocked slightly on his heels. His voice was pleasant and subdued. Somewhere down on the steerage deck a falsetto tenor warbled passionately of love and death. Overhead, a thick black ribbon of smoke rolled back from the Libertà's belching funnel and streamed across the face of the white moon.

“The Marias,” Gonelli said, “are ours. The mines were known to the Indians and Spaniards before the Italians landed in Magella at all. There is a piece of gold in the cathedral that came from the mina tapada of the upper Marias—I have seen it, Signor Pug, and I can safely say that gold like that was never destined to fall into American hands. The Magellans will die, every last peon, Spaniard, Portuguese, and Italian, every Indian, every babe in arms, before an American sinks a shaft on the slopes of the Marias. We hold the old trail—where you Americans hope to build a railway. I tell you, you cannot throw the Magellan bull. We are great fighters. We fight for the fun of it. We know every stream and water hole in the mountains, every hiding place, every trail, no matter how steep, how dangerous, or how terrible. We Magellans fight for the fun of the thing, for adventure; we can march fifty miles a day on a meal of rice and coffee; we sing as we die. If you fight Magella you fight an imposing enemy. Mind you, my friend, there are only a few of us, but we aren't afraid of anything. Some of us are idealists, many of us are visionaries—all of us are fighting men. The Marias belong to us, racially, morally, and by conquest. We intend to hold them and to deny Bianchi's false claim until the bitter end. Signor Pug, we were polite enough when Bianchi sold our heritage to the Fairchild Company. But the Marias you shall never have!”

Pug's infectious grin might have meant any thing—stupidity, arrogance, or the cocksure Americano brand of defiance Gonelli knew and despised.

"Do you understand?"

"I understand," Pug answered in a sleepy voice. "It's too bad you and I can't be friends. You believe in your cause as I believe in mine. We are both used to having our own way. Praise God, Signor Gonelli, for such an enemy as you." *

Gonelli smiled and bowed. "I am the leader of the Nationalists," he said. "With us, it is Magella first, last, and always. We resent the exploitation of our wealth by you Americans. We will oppose you, even if you send for a fleet and an army to deal with us."

"It would be much easier," Pug suggested mildly, "to surrender to me."

Gonelli shrugged his shoulders and glanced around the crowded deck, where groups of somnolent Magellans lay stretched full length, their conical straw hats tipped over their eyes. "These men are all Nationalists," he said. "They could persuade you to swim back to Panama, I dare say. But I propose to let you go on to Magella. You will have time to regret many things."

"Thanks," said Pug.

"Not at all."

Gonelli nodded and walked away with the leisurely, disdainful tread of his class. Pug stared after him until he disappeared into the cabin. Then he drew back his head and whistled softly. He couldn't remember when he had been so happy.

"Dad has sent me down here to lick Magella single handed," he thought. "The wonderful old sport!"

Then for three days Pug watched Gonelli and his Nationalists. While the little steamer sprawled down the hot, glittering sea toward Magella, they squatted in the meagre shade of the awnings stretched over the Liberta's dirty decks, playing mysterious games with greasy packs of dog-eared cards. The night was made hideous by their nasal caterwauling at the moon. They were sullen, childish, and absurd, and Pug thought: "H these are a fair sample of the Magellan fighting men, I could lick their whole army with a popgun." -

The days passed in the deadly monotony of glaring sky and sea. The crawling Liberta reeked vilely of crowded and unwashed humanity. She moved slowly across the glassy surface of the water, leaving scarcely a ripple to show her passing. Always behind her a cloud of ravenous gulls wheeled and dipped, watching tirelessly for scraps of food. It was hot, it was deadly dull, it was unending. Pug heard the words "Columbia" and "Bianchi" rise from the Babel of Magellan tongues like sparks, never failing to kindle a roar of invective. Once he heard his dad's name spat like an oath from the lips of a big Portuguese. And he remembered what his dad had told him: "The Magellans have no respect for a Fairchild." Apparently not. Yet Pug was left alone. If Gonelli had picked him out for eventual assassination, the straw-hatted Nationalists were immensely patient. -

Night after night the red-hot sun rolled down into the brown sea and Pug slept unmolested in the hammock that had been slung for him on the forward deck. All about him the Magellans slept side by side in grotesque, oddly collapsed attitudes of profound repose, their arms outspread, their upturned bare feet pointing heavenward like the feet of so many pathetic corpses. Faint sighs, snores, broken whispers rose from the sleeping men. Here and there a cigarette glowed, a little spot of ardent crimson in the purity of the brilliant night. Pug lay still, watching the mast light swinging imperceptibly against the stars, listening to the rustle of water against the Liberta's rusty sides. He waited, even while he slept, for a knife thrust through the hammock. Such things didn't happen in the padded luxury of New York clubs. But they happened out here. Happened and were forgotten. Pug closed his eyes and trusted to luck and to the divine partiality of his guardian angel.

One morning he opened his eyes to a gaudy sunrise and sat bolt upright to stare across the polished sea at a blue shadow lying on the horizon, irregular, hazy, as unsubstantial as a mirage. Land! Magella probably! All his life Pug had dreamed of those saw-toothed mountains, the fabulous peaks of the Santa Christina. He had heard of them when he was in his cradle; they were

the substance of his boyish longings. He slipped out of the hammock and went to the rail to stare at the ghost of them floating on the horizon, half lost in the glory of the early morning light. He clenched his hands and threw back his head. This was going to be the biggest hoop of all and he didn't intend to stub his toe if he could help it. His dad and that girl were watching him. Failure never entered his mind. He was young, he was happy, and he had a vast appetite for life.

When he turned around he found the eyes of Gonelli's Nationalists fixed on him. They were watching him quietly—not particularly hostile but very alert. Pug felt their scrutiny all that morning, while the exhausted *Libertà* edged toward the nebulous mirage on the horizon. At noon the Santa Christina Range loomed clearly against the sky, every rib and spiny valley distinct under the glare of the sun. The little city of Magella appeared suddenly, white squares against a background of luscious, tropic green. The *Libertà* turned at right angles with a tremendous splash of her ridiculous propeller and steamed into the harbour between two grey, lonely lighthouses that guarded the farthestmost tips of the protecting half-moon of land.

Gonelli, with a malicious sparkle in his eyes, pointed across the glittering harbour at the city. "There is Magella," he said to Pug. "You have seen it. Why not stay on board the *Libertà* and go back? I warn you that once on shore you will not be safe. I am a merciful enemy, but I stick at nothing when the honour of Magella is at stake."

Pug laughed. "For a villain," he said, "you're uncommonly polite. Thanks. I think I'll go ashore."

Gonelli's band of Nationalists had crowded around their chief and were watching him eagerly, like comic-opera brigands waiting for their cue. Pug winked at them and turned his head to look at Magella. A little flotilla of rowboats had put off from shore to meet the *Libertà*. Before them, racing through the water at top speed, a motor launch flying the Stars and Stripes hurried out to the steamer, "hellbent to get there first," Pug thought. He could see a man standing upright in

the bow, his white clothes conspicuous against the dazzling blue of the harbour. Pug's heart leaped. "Bully for the Consul," he thought. "He's coming out for me. No one else would dare." He waved his hand and suddenly sprang up on the rail, balanced there a brief second, and made a clean, straight dive overboard. He came up, shook the water out of his eyes, and swam with all his strength to meet the launch. Gonelli's Nationalists, getting their cue too late, sent an erratic, crazy volley of shots after him, shots that fell wide of the mark, like a handful of futile pebbles. The Consul's launch made a wide turn and came up behind Pug. He looked up and saw the flag rattling smartly against the sky and the Consul's astonished face peering down at him.

"Are you all right?"

"All right. Lend me a hand."

The Consul, grasping Pug's hand, dragged him on board with an air of immense satisfaction. "I thought they had you," he said, as the launch turned and rushed toward shore. "I can't tell you how relieved I am. When I got word from your father that you were coming down, I shook in my boots." He fixed his very round, bright eyes on the dripping and ecstatic Pug. "Do you know who was aboard the *Liberta*, young man? Gonelli, the national fire eater, the most talented little trouble-maker in Magella! He was bringing 25,000 rifles and 2,500,000 rounds of ammunition." The Consul threw out his arms in a wide gesture of despair. "Rifles and ammunition to arm the Nationalists, Mr. Fairchild. A Nationalist is the Yankee's hereditary enemy. Good Lord! And you got into a nest of them."

Pug was not listening. He stared beyond the excited Consul at the little city, the Richard Harding Davis place of his dreams. It rushed toward them, distinct, unreal, as gaudy and theatrical as stage scenery. Pug could see the white Custom House, the row of clipped trees on the Esplanade, the flat-roofed houses piled up along the water front and dwindling into wooded suburbs beyond the narrow city limits. Behind Magella the Santa Christina Mountains towered against the sky, wrapped in heat fumes, opalescent, mysterious, like prodigious clouds of vapour. Pug's heart contracted. It was all so familiar. If only his dad

could see it! It was the sort of country, the sort of sunlight, the sort of air that gets into your blood. Pug liked it. Here was a dream worth fighting for.



THE GARDEN'S PLACE IN CIVILIZATION

by Grace Tabor

from **Come Into the Garden**

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"There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners." —Hamlet.

Recognizing the natural—and proper—tendency of those who practice any art to regard that art as peculiarly important, and as a consequence to exalt its service to the human race until it alone seems responsible for human progress, I am nevertheless obliged to assert that here is the one art without which the aforesaid race could never have emerged at all from primitive conditions! Moreover, it is also true that without it—I am speaking to the broadest concept of it—mankind would speedily lose everything held dear, and would slip back into a condition very much more difficult and more dangerous to survival, as well as very much less worthy, than that occupied prior to the more or less well-known dawn of civilization.

For what, after all, was that dawn? Where did it break? And what were the first faint streaks in the sky? That man's first differentiation from the animal came with the fashioning of tools is sufficiently apparent not to be open to argument, of course; but neither

this nor his subsequent rude architecture, nor even the discovery and use of fire can be said to have carried him very far forward on the long road he has traveled, since savages to-day employ as much. No, it was none of these.

It was with the first deliberate planting of a seed and cultivation of a plant that the darkness of the racial night began really to lift. And it is to the degree of his loyalty to this first great science-art that man is a success or failure in the world to-day!

Perhaps this seems the usual exaggeration of the devotee; but need I do more than point out the complete dependence of all creation upon a reliable and regular food supply, to prove my case? We have had too recent example of world food shortage to forget altogether how real a menace to every human being individually such shortage may become within an alarmingly short space of time, once production is abandoned. Wherefore we have writ large before us so that he who runs may read, the great and universal obligation of stewardship, wherein each one of us shares, to promote and foster this art in all its branches.

The strongest of all instincts presumably is the instinct of self-preservation—which is the reason that the instinct to grow things lies so deep in the human heart; for the latter is actually merely an extension of the former. Some will say that they lack it altogether, I know; and I grant at once that they seem to. But of these—and to them—let me add that it has never been my experience to find anyone lacking it wholly, once they are given a chance to know what a garden really can be, and can do for them and to them as well as to the world in which they live and have their being. It is the pressure of other things that makes them impatient of Nature's slow processes, or total unfamiliarity with the work, or misconception generally that accounts for indifference. Interest never resists the appeal of the miracles of everyday in the garden, when this has an opportunity to assert itself.

The stewardship of which I have spoken demands that it be given this opportunity; and

the active exercise of stewardship begins with the establishment of every home, whether it is large or small. This is the truth that we ought everyone to realize and be governed by. Yet it is not enough that we act upon an instinct of self-preservation alone, since this would induce each household to be merely food producers—which is neither practicable nor desirable at this late day. The analogy holds, here as elsewhere, between gardening and architecture; since we go a great deal farther now than to provide ourselves just with shelter—the bare necessity—in our exercise of the art of building, so we have arrived at a time when the finer aspects of the art of gardening must prevail. Our one great difficulty in this connection, however, is our tendency to disregard the early, real purpose of it and to devote ourselves to the finer aspects altogether; which is as if we built our houses without roofs because roofs are less interesting and decorative and generally appealing than side walls and doors and fenestration. The suggestion made by Bacon in his essay on gardens has been quoted so often and universally that I long since foreswore its literal transcription, yet it sums up so much of all that there is to say introductory to the subject that it is almost impossible to do without it ! He was so wholly right, and it is so true that, of the twin arts of building and gardening, the latter represents—and requires—the greater perfection. But we have been building stately for long enough now to begin to garden finely; and we are moreover as a nation coming to that selfconsciousness which inspires real effort in the arts, in the desire to express itself. Hence we are ready to produce something worthy in gardens—and when I say worthy I mean just that, in every sense and all senses of the word. We are ready not only to assume the obligations of our stewardship of such land as we acquire, but we are ready to spare no pains to embellish and make beautiful as well as to make productive. We are ready at last to justify possession of our bit of earth, inasmuch as we are ready to make the most of it in the fullest sense. Distinct from its aspect as a civilizing factor, therefore, is the garden's aspect as an evidence

of the progress of civilization. It established it in the first place; and now it is the measure by which it may be gauged. Crude people garden crudely—this is as true of individuals as it is of races—while people of high culture and highly evolved discrimination and sense of harmony, garden finely. By their gardens indeed shall we know them; for a garden is surely the fruit of its creator's mind and will reveal the inner man as nothing else he can make. Which is another striking thing about them—they will not deceive nor give out a false impression. Hence if it is desired to produce a certain impression through the home and its gardens, it is necessary to start in the very heart of things and become what that impression signifies. In no other way will it be possible to convince; we must be, in other words, what we want our garden to make us seem.

Happily this works both ways; for the garden itself is the best means of becoming genuine — of getting right oneself. Just why this is so does not always appear on the surface of things—but I suspect it is because everything dealt with in the garden is so genuine, and because it is in itself such an elemental occupation. There is virtue in earth contact and there is inspiration in the observation of plant unfoldment, whether we are mystical, empirical, or rationalistic in our temperament—whether we believe it or not, in short. And what is more, it works, whether we believe it or not. So we have only to give it the chance; the rest will come.

In its application to the individual and the individual garden all that I have just said resolves itself into one sound maxim for a starting point, namely :—the garden is at once the opportunity and the achievement, the cause and the result. If this is understood nothing more need be said in urgency of its claims; the rest will come along in due season and order—helped perhaps a little bit by the further content of this volume. At least I hope so!



VALERIA AND OWEN QUENTILLIAN

by E. M. Delafield

from **The Optimist** (Chapter 1)

(Copyrighted, 1922, The Macmillan Company.)

The ship swung slowly away from the side of the wharf. Several people on board"- then . said, "Well, we're off at last!" to several other people tho had only been thinking of saying it. '

Owen Quentillian remembered another, longer", Seavoyage taken by himself at an early age. Far more clearly he remembered his arrival at St. Gwenllian.

It was that which he wanted to recall, aware as he was of the necessity for resuming a connection that had almost insensibly lapsed for several years.

He deliberately let his mind travel backwards, visualizing himself, a disconsolate, shivering morsel, being taken away from Papa and Mamma at the very station itself, and put into an open pony-cart beside Miss Lucilla Morchard.

The conversation between them, as far as he could recollect it, had run upon strangely categorical lines.

"Who are you?"

"I'm Canon Morchard's daughter. You can call me Lucilla."

"How old are you?"

"I'm fifteen, but you shouldn't ask grown-up persons their age."

"Oh, are you a grown-up person?"

"Of course I am. My mother is dead, and I look after the house and the children, and now I'm going to look after you as well."

Lucilla had smiled very nicely as she said this.

"How many children are there?-' ' '."

"Three, at home. My eldest brother is at school."

"What are the names of the other ones?"

"Valeria and Flpraahd Adrian. Valeria and Flora are sometime^ called Val and Flossie."

He had-'- discovered afterwards that they were seldom. calfed. anything else, except by their father.

-'.'.Why don't Papa and Mamma come in this little carriage too?"

"Because there wouldn't have been room. They will come in the brougham, later on."

"They won't go back to India without saying good bye first, will they?" he asked wistfully.

He had known for a long time that Papa and Mamma were going back to India and leaving him at St.

Gwenllian.

"No, I promise you they won't do that," had said Lucilla seriously.

Owen had felt entirely that her word was one to be relied upon. Very few grown-up persons gave him that feeling.

He remembered extraordinarily little about the house at St. Gwenllian. It was large, and cold, and there were a good many pictures on the walls, but the only two rooms of which he retained a mental photograph were the schoolroom, and the Canon's library.

He saw the latter room first.

Lucilla had taken him there at once.

He remembered the books against the wall—numbers and numbers of books—and the big black writing table, with a small bowl of violets next to a pile of papers, and above the writing table a finely-carved ivory figure, crucified upon a wooden cross, set in a long plaque of pale-green velvet.

Lucilla had seemed to be disappointed because her father was out.

"He said he did so want to be here to welcome you himself, but he is always very busy. Some one sent for him, I think."

The youthful Owen Quentillian had cared less than nothing for the non-appearance of his future host and tutor. The prospect of the schoolroom tea had touched him more nearly.

But the schoolroom tea had turned out to be a sort of nightmare.

Even now, he could hardly smile at the recollection of that dreadful meal.

Eventually Val and Flossie had resolved themselves into good-natured, cheerful little girls, and Adrian into a slightly spoilt and rather precocious little boy, addicted to remarks of the type hailed as "wonderful" in the drawing-room and "affected humbug" in the schoolroom.

But on that first evening, Val and Flossie had been two monsters with enormous eyes that stared disapprovingly, all the time, straight at Owen Quentillian and nobody else. Adrian had been an utterly incomprehensible, rather malignant little creature, who had asked questions.

"Can you see colours for each day of the week?"

Quentillian wondered whether he had looked as much alarmed as he had felt, in his utter bewilderment.

"I think Monday is blue, and Tuesday light green,

and Wednesday dark green," Adrian had then proclaimed, triumphantly, and casting his big brown eyes about as though to make sure that his three sisters had heard the enunciation of his strange creed.

"Adrian is not a bit like other little boys," one of them had then said, with calm pride.

Owen Quentillian, unconscious of irony, had ardently hoped that she spoke truly.

Adrian had pinched him surreptitiously during tea, and had laughed in a way that made Owen flush when they had asked him what India was like and he had answered "I don't know."

He had thought the thick bread-and-butter nasty, and wondered if there was never any cake. A vista of past teas, with sugared cakes from the drawing-room, especially selected by himself, and brought to his own little table on the back veranda by the Ayah, made him choke.

There had been a dreadful moment when he had snatched at the horrid mug they had given him and held it before his face for a long, long time, desperately pretending to drink, and not daring to show his face.

Lucilla, seated at the head of the table, had offered the others more tea, but she had said nothing to the little strange boy, and he still felt grateful to her.

The miserable, chaotic jumble that was all that his mind retained, of interminable slices of bread-andbutter that tasted like sawdust, of thick, ugly white china, of hostile or mocking gazes, of jokes and allusions in which he had no share, all came to a sudden end when he had given up any hope of ever being happy again so long as he lived.

Canon Morchard had come into the room.

And, magically, Val and Flossie had turned into quiet, insignificant little girls, looking gently and trustfully at their father, and no longer staring curiously at Owen Quentillian, and Adrian had become a wideeyed, guileless baby, and the thick bread-and-butter and the ugly china no longer existed at all.

Only Lucilla had undergone no transformation.

She said "This is Owen Quentillian, Father," in a matter-of-fact tone of voice.

"I know, my child, I know."

His hand, large and protecting, had grasped the boy's hand, and after a moment he stooped and put his lips gently to Owen's forehead.

Quentillian remembered a presence of general benignity, a strangely sweet smile that came, however, very

rarely, a deep voice, and an effect of commanding height and size.

Memory could not recapture any set form of words, but Quentillian endeavoured, whimsically, to recast certain speeches which he felt to be permeated with the spirit of the Canon.

"My dear little boy, I hope you may come to feel this as home. We shall all of us endeavour to make it so. Lucilla here is my little housekeeper—ask her for anything that you want. Valeria—my tomboy. She and you will have some grand romps together. Flora is younger ; nearer your own age, perhaps. Flora plays the piano, and we hope that she may show great feeling for Art, by and bye. Little Adrian, I am sure, has already made friends with you. I call him the Little Friend of all the World. There are some very quaint fancies under this brown mop, but we shall make something out of them one of these days—one of these days."

Some such introduction there had certainly been. The Canon had been nothing if not categorical, and Quentillian could fancifully surmise in him a bewilderment not untinged with resentment had his Valeria one day tired of being a tomboy, and elected to patronize the piano, or Flora suddenly become imbued with a romping spirit, to the detriment of her* artistic propensities.

But the Canon's children had always refrained from any volte-face calculated to disconcert their parent. Quentillian was almost sure that all of them, except Lucilla, had been afraid of him—even Adrian, on whom his father had lavished a peculiar cherishing tenderness.

Quentillian could remember certain sharp, stern rebukes, called forth by Valeria's tendency to untimely giggles, or Flora's infantile tears, or his own occasional sulks and obstinacy under the new regime. But he could only once remember Adrian in disgrace, and so abysmal had been the catastrophe, that imagination was unneeded for recalling it clearly.

Adrian had told a lie.

Quentillian re-lived the terrible episode.

"Which of you children took a message for me from Radly yesterday? Not you, Lucilla?"

"No, father."

"Mrs. Radly died last night." The Canon's face was suffused. "She asked for me all yesterday, and Radly

actually left her in order to find some way of sending me a message. I hear now that he met "one of the St. Gwenllian children" and sent an urgent summons which was never delivered. Which was never delivered! Good Heavens, children, think of it ! I was here, in our own home circle, enjoying a pleasant evening reading aloud, when that woman was dying there in the farm, craving for the help and comfort that I, her shepherd and pastor, could and should have given her. '* He covered his face with his hand and groaned aloud.

"In all the years of my ministry," he said slowly, "I have never had a more bitter blow. And dealt me by one of my own household! Children," his voice boomed suddenly terrible, "which of you received Radly's message yesterday?"

Quentillian, in the retrospect, felt no surprise at the absence of any competition in laying claim to the implied responsibility.

At last Lucilla said tentatively :

"Val? Flora?"

"I never saw Radly at all, yesterday, nor any other day," said Val, her brown eyes wide open and fixed straight upon her father.

Flora's little, pretty face was pale and scared.

"It wasn't me. No one ever gave me any message."

Her voice trembled as though she feared to be disbelieved.

"Owen?" said the Canon sternly.

"No, sir."

"Adrian?" his voice softened.

"No, father."

The Canon hardly appeared to listen to Adrian's answer. His hand was on the little boy's brown curls, in the fond, half -absent, gesture habitual to him. He faced the children, and his eye rested upon Owen Quentillian.

"If any one of you," he said sternly and slowly, "has been betrayed into telling me a lie, understand that it is not yet too late for full confession. Selfish heedlessness cannot be judged by its terrible consequences, and if I spoke too strongly just now, it was out of the depths of my own grief and shame. The forgetfulness was bad—very bad—but that I can forgive. A lie, I can not forgive. It is not too late."

His face was white and terrible as he gazed with strained eyes at the children.

Little Flora began to cry, and: Lucilla put her arm

round her.

"Understand me, children, denial is perfectly useless. I know that message was given to one of you, and that it was not delivered, and it is simply a question of hours before I see Radly and obtain from him the name of the child to whom the message was given. I accuse no one of you, but I implore the culprit to speak out. Otherwise," he hit the table with his clenched fist, and it seemed as though lightning shot from his blazing eyes, "otherwise I shall know that there dwells under my roof a liar and a coward."

Quentillian could hear still the scorn that rang in that deep, vibrant voice, terrifying the children. Not one of them spoke.

And the Canon had gone out of the room with anguish in his eyes.

The nursery court-martial that followed was held by Lucilla.

"Flossie, it couldn't have been you, because you stayed in all yesterday with your cold. Owen and Val were out in the afternoon?"

"We went to see the woman with the new twins," said Val, indignantly. "We never met anyone the whole way, did we, Owen?"

"No."

Owen Quentillian had known all the time what was coming. He knew, with the terrible, intimate knowledge of the nursery, that Adrian was the only one of the Canon's children who did not always speak the truth. Apparently Lucilla, also, knew.

She said "Oh Adrian," in a troubled, imploring voice.

"I didn't," said Adrian, and burst into tears.

"I knew it was Adrian," said little Flora. "I saw Radly coming up the lane very fast, I saw him out of the night-nursery window, and I saw Adrian, too. I knew it was Adrian, all the time."

None of the children was surprised.

Adrian, confronted with their take-it-for-granted attitude, ceased his mechanical denials.

The pre-occupation of them all, was Canon Morchard.

"It'll be less bad if you tell him yourself than if Radly does," Owen Quentillian pointed out.

"Of course, it makes it much worse having told him a lie," Val said crudely, "but perhaps he didn't much notice what you said. I'm sure he thought it was Owen, all the time."

How much better if it had been Owen, if it had

been any one of them, save the Canon's best-loved child, his youngest son !

"You must come and tell him at once," Lucilla decreed—but not hopefully.

"I can't. You know what he said about a liar and a coward under his roof."

Adrian cried and shivered.

"He wasn't angry the time I broke the clock," said Flora. "He took me on his knee and only just talked to me. I didn't mind a bit."

"But you hadn't told a story," said the inexorable Val.

They all knew that there lay the crux of the matter. Quantillian could see the circle of scared, perplexed faces still—Lucilla, troubled, but unastonished, keeping a vigilant hold on Adrian all the time, Val, frankly horrified and full of outspoken predictions of the direst description, Flossie in tears, stroking and fondling Adrian's hand with the tenderest compassion. He even visualized the pale, squarely built, little flaxen-haired boy that had been himself.

They could not persuade Adrian to confess.

At last Lucilla said: "If you don't tell him, Adrian, then I shall."

And so it had been, because Canon Morchard, re-entering the schoolroom, had, with a penetration to which his children were accustomed, instantly perceived the tears and the terror on Adrian's face.

"What is it, little lad? Have you hurt yourself?"

The kind, unsuspecting concern in his voice, as he held out his hand !

Quantillian was certain that a pause had followed the enquiry—Adrian's opportunity, conceded by Lucilla, even while she knew, as they all did, that he would take no advantage of it.

Then Lucilla had told.

Quantillian's thoughts went off at a tangent, dwelling for the first time, with a certain surprised admiration, upon Lucilla's resolute, almost matter-of-fact performance of her painful and alarming task.

Canon Morchard had been incredulous at first, and Lucilla had steadily repeated, and reiterated again and again, the dreadful truth.

A black time had followed.

It assumed the proportions of a twelve-month, in the retrospect. Could it have extended over a week? Strangely enough, Quantillian could not recall the exact fate of Adrian, but he knew that the Canon first

fulminated words of wrath and scorn, and at last had actually broken down, tears streaming down his furrowed face, and that the sight of this unrestrained display of suffering had caused the boy Owen to creep from the room, with the strange, sick feeling of one who had witnessed an indecency.

All the children except Lucilla, who indeed scarcely counted as one of them, had avoided Canon Morchard in the ensuing days. They had crept about the house silently, and at meals no one spoke until the Canon had left the room. Owen Quentillian, playing with a ball in the passage and inadvertently bouncing it against the closed study door, had been suddenly confronted by the Canon, and the look of grief and horror fixed upon that handsome face had rendered any spoken rebuke for levity unnecessary.

After all, they had left an impression, those Morchards, all of them, Quentillian reflected.

Lucilla had been calm, matter-of-fact, competent—perhaps a little inhuman. Val, impetuous, noisy, inclined to defiance, yet frankly terrified of her father. Flossie—impossible to think of her as Flora, unless the name was uttered in the Canon's full, deep tones—surely the prettiest of the three, gentler than Val, less self-assured than Lucilla, timid only with her father. Adrian, of course, did not speak the truth. His contemporaries had known it, although Canon Morchard had not realized the little boy's habitual weakness. But then he had never realized that the children were afraid of him.

Why had they all been afraid of him?

Quentillian decided that it must have been because of his own phenomenal rectitude, his high standard of honour, and above all and especially, his deep, fundamental sense of religion.

Canon Morchard, undoubtedly, lived "in the presence of God." Even the little boy Owen had known that, and, thinking backwards, Quentillian was convinced of it still.

He felt curious to see the Canon again. David Morchard had said to him in Mesopotamia: "Go and see him. They've none of them forgotten you, and they'll be glad of first-hand news. I've only been home once in five years."

The shrug of his shoulders had seemed to Quentillian expressive.

But evidently David had judged his family correctly. The Canon had written and invited his old pupil to

stay with him.

"It will not only be joy untold to receive news of our dear lad, David, but a real pleasure to us all to welcome you amongst us once more. I have not forgotten my pupil of long ago days, nor my daughters their erstwhile playfellow. You will find all at home, including Adrian. Dear fellow, I had hoped it was to be the Church for him, but he has been so open, so anxious to decide the whole important question rightly, that one can only leave the decision to him in all confidence. I would not hurry him in any way, but his brief Army days are over, thank God, and we have the untold pleasure of having him with us now, so full of fun and high spirits, dear boy. You, with your pre-war experience of Oxford, will perhaps be able to talk things over with him and help him to a right and wise decision.

"You will remember my eldest daughter, Lucilla. She is still my right hand, mothering the younger ones, and yet finding time for all sorts of wider interests than those afforded by her secretarial work for me. I think that you will agree with me that Lucilla's intellectual abilities, had she been less of a home bird, must have made their mark in the world.

"Valeria is still something of the madcap that perhaps you remember. Her energy and enthusiasm keep us all in the best of spirits, even though we are sometimes a little startled at the new ideas sprung upon us. Both she and Flora worked valiantly during the terrible war years, though I could spare neither of my darlings to leave home for very long at a time. Valeria, however, was six months in France at a Canteen, and I believe rendered really valuable service. Little Flora, as I still call her, gives pleasure to us all with her music, and our men in hospital were sharers in her gift as far as we could manage it."

Quentillian took up yet another sheet of note-paper covered with small, legible writing. It came back to him with a sense of familiarity, that the Canon had always been an expansive and prolific writer of letters.

"Make us a long visit, my dear boy. There are no near ones to claim you, alas, and I should like you to remember that it was to us that your dear father and mother first confided you when they left you for what we then hoped was to be only a short term of years. God saw otherwise, my dear lad, and called them unto Himself. How incomprehensible are His ways, and how, through it all, one must feel that mysterious cer

tainty 'all things work together for good, to those that love Him!' Those words have been more present to me than I can well tell you, during the years of storm and stress. David's long, weary time in Mesopotamia tried one high, but when Adrian, my Benjamin, buckled on his armour and went forth, my heart must have failed me, but for that wonderful strength that seems to bear one up in the day of tribulation. How often have I not said to myself : 'He hath given His angels charge over thee ... in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone !'

"Perhaps you will smile at this rambling letter of an almost-old man, but I fancy that as one grows older, the need to bear testimony becomes ever a stronger and more personal thing. His ways are so wonderful ! It seems to me, for instance, a direct gift from His hand that the Owen Quentillian to whom I gave his first Latin prose should be returning to us once more, a distinguished young writer. I wonder if we shall recognize you? I have so vivid a recollection of the white hair and eyelashes that made the village boys call out, 'Go it, Snowball !' as they watched your prowess on the football field !

"Well, dear fellow, I must close this. You have only to let us know the day and hour of your arrival, and the warmest of welcomes awaits you.

"I must sign myself, in memory of old happy times,

"Yours ever affectionately,

"Fenwick Morchard."

Quentillian, with great precision, folded the sheets together again.

"So Lucilla is a home-bird, Valeria is still something of a madcap, Flora is still 'little Flora,' and Adrian is a dear lad who is anxious to decide rightly about his future career."

He wondered doubtfully whether he himself would come to endorse the Canon's opinion of the Canon's progeny.

And what was the Canon himself, if labels were to be thus distributed?

The sensation of doubt in Quentillian's mind was accentuated, but he concluded his reflections by reminding himself, half tolerantly, and half with a certain grimness, that the Canon was at least, according to himself, Quentillian's ever affectionate Fenwick Morchard.

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"This is like old times," said Quentillian.

Lucilla Morchard smiled, shook hands with him, and made no answer, and Quentillian immediately, and with annoyance, became conscious that the occasion was not in the least like old times.

Apparently Miss Morchard did not accept clichés uncritically.

Her face, indeed, expressed a spirit both critical and perceptive. Quentillian could still trace the schoolgirl Lucilla in the clearly-cut, unbeautiful oval, with the jaw slightly underhung, grey, short-sighted eyes, and straight black brows. Her dark hair was folded plainly beneath her purple straw hat, but he could discern that there was all the old abundance of it. Her figure was tall and youthful, but her face made her look fully her age. He surmised that Lucilla must be thirty-five, now.

"This time, my father is here to welcome you."

She turned round, and Quentillian saw the Canon.

"Ah, dear fellow! Welcome—welcome you be, in deed!"

A hand grasped Quentillian's hand, an arm was laid across his shoulders, and the Canon's full, hearty voice, very deep and musical, rang in his ears.

Quentillian felt inadequate.

With all the acute self-consciousness of the modern, he was perfectly aware that Canon Morchard's warmth of feeling and ardour of demonstration awoke in him self nothing but a slight, distinctly unpleasant, sensation of gratitude, and a feeble fear of appearing as unresponsive as he felt.

"I think it's the same Owen Quentillian, isn't it?"

The steady pressure of the Canon's arm compelled his unwilling returned prodigal to remain still, facing him, and submit to a scrutiny from kind, narrowed eyes.

"Just the same. All is well—well, indeed."

The Canon's hand smote Quentillian gently between the shoulders, as they walked down the platform.

"The trap is waiting, dear boy. They are eager for your arrival, at home. I have my whole goodly company awaiting you, thank God—Lucilla here, and my merry Valeria, and little Flora with her incurably shy ways, and my Benjamin—the youngest of the flock—Adrian. You and Adrian must have many talks, dear lad. I want just such a friend for him as yourself—full of youth, and fun, and merriment, as he is himself, and yet able to help him when it comes to facing the deeper issues—the deeper issues. You young people

must have many wise, deep talks, together, such as youth loves. I remember my University days so well and how 'we tired the sun with talking'—aye, Owen, your father and I were famous philosophers, once upon a time ! How does that strike you, eh?"

It struck Quentillian principally that his father's contemporary reminded him oddly of a book of late Victorian memoirs, but he did not voice the impression aloud.

Instead, it was a relief to him to be able to make an obvious, and yet perfectly sincere, comment upon the unchanged aspect of the old red-brick house, standing well away from the small town.

"Valeria is our gardener," said Canon Morchard.

"You will be consulted about various borders and the like, no doubt. But we have all of us an interest in botany. You must remember that from the old days, eh? There was a collecting craze, if I remember rightly, that led to a great deal of friendly rivalry amongst you children."

Quentillian's recollection of the collecting craze differed so drastically from that of the Canon, that he glanced involuntarily at Lucilla. She met his eye calmly, but he fancied a little latent hostility in her unconsciousness.

It rather served to confirm his impression of the extreme lack of spontaneity that had characterized those bygone excursions into the realms of Nature. They had been undertaken, at least by himself and his ally and contemporary, Valeria, with one eye, as it were, upon the Canon's study window. Even Adrian, if Quentillian remembered rightly, had relaxed the normal enthusiasm of boyhood in the pursuit of bird's eggs, after the wondrous eye for detail of the bird's Creator had been sufficiently often pointed out to him.

"Welcome home," said the Canon happily. "You remember the old garden? I seem to recollect some capital fun going on amongst the old rhododendron bushes at hide-and-seek, eh? We play lawn-tennis, nowadays. I see a sett is going on now. Who is here this afternoon, Lucilla?"

"Captain Cuscaden is playing with Flora, and I suppose it's Mr. Clover in the far court."

"To be sure. Clover is my excellent curate, who has been one of ourselves for several years now. Sit ye down, young people, sit ye down. Tea will be out here directly, and the players will no doubt come for

refreshment."

The Canon settled himself with the deliberation of a heavily-built man, and leant back in his wicker chair, with finger-tips joined together, the breeze stirring the thick grey hair upon his temples.

It was a cameo-like head, with something of the ivory colouring of a cameo, but the cameo's blank orbs were replaced by deeply-set, brilliant hazel eyes of which the flashing, ardent outlook recalled at once the child and the fanatic. Innumerable fine lines were crossed and recrossed at the corners of either socket, but the broad forehead was singularly open and unlined. Quentillian noted the feminine sweetness of the closed mouth, contrasting with the masculine jut of the strong, prominent jaw. His mind registered simultaneously the recollection of the Canon's violent and terrifying outbursts of anger, and his astonishing capabilities of tenderness.

The latter expression was altogether predominant, as the tennis players came to join the group under the cedars.

"Valeria—Flora—you need no introductions here, dear lad. Clover, let me present my old pupil—one of whom you have very often heard us speak—Owen Quentillian. This is my very good friend and helper. And . . . Ah, Captain Cuscaden—Mr. Quentillian."

Quentillian fancied less enthusiasm in this last introduction, and it seemed to him significant that no descriptive phrase followed the name. Either Captain Cuscaden was not worth classifying, or he could not satisfactorily be relegated into any class, and Quentillian suspected that Canon Morchard would resent the latter state of affairs more than the former.

At all events, Cuscaden was good-looking, of bold allure and sunburnt face, revealing the most perfect of teeth in a pleasant smile.

Mr. Clover was sandy and pale and seemed to be talkative.

"I believe I should have known you anywhere,"

Valeria Morchard told Quentillian, frankly gazing at him. He was not sorry to have the opportunity of gazing back as frankly at her.

As children, the handsome or unhandsome looks of Val, his inseparable playmate, had naturally interested him not at all. He had vaguely acquiesced in the universal nursery dictum that Flora, with her fair curls and wide, innocent eyes, was pretty, but he now found

her blond slenderness insignificant in the extreme compared to Valeria, with her tall and perfectly balanced figure, ripe-apricot bloom, and brown laughing eyes. No longer a very young girl, she somehow combined the poise of her twenty-seven years with a shy, semiabruptness of diction reminiscent of seventeen.

Quentillian thought her charming.

So, apparently, did the other men.

"And who bore off the palm of victory?"

Canon Morchard indicated the tennis court.

"We won, at five games all. A very good sett,"

Clover replied. "My partner's service is almost invincible."

Canon Morchard smiled.

"We think Valeria's service is her strong point," he explained to Quentillian. "She was coached by our dear David, and David is no mean player, I assure you. Little Flora needs to stand up to the ball better—stand up to the ball better. Flora has the feminine tendency to hit out too soon—eh, Flora? Our champion is Adrian, however. You and he will have some great contests, I foresee."

The more the Canon foresaw, the more did Quentillian's own aspirations turn in search of contrary directions. The only diversion of those predicted by his host, of which he felt able to tolerate the thought, was that of being consulted by Valeria upon the her baceous borders.

"Clover, there, has a particularly good stroke on to the back line, but you'll get to know it. Have you played at all since you left the 'Varsity?"

"I got a good deal of tennis when I was home on leave in nineteen-sixteen, but nothing after that, when I was in Mesopotamia."

"Were you not in Flanders, dear boy?"

"In 'fifteen and 'sixteen," said Quentillian briefly.

He wished to remember neither his two years on the Western front, nor his many months in Hospital with shell-shock.

"Where did you and David meet, in Mesopotamia?" inquired Lucilla.

Quentillian had forgotten her presence, if not her existence, but he felt grateful to her for sparing him the tentative category of his soldiering capabilities which he suspected the Canon of having in readiness. He was not, however, given time to answer Lucilla's question.

The Canon's hand was uplifted.

"Ah, Lucilla my dear—please! My little talk with Owen there, is to come later. There is so much that I want to hear about our David—much, indeed. And you shall have your share of news about your brother, my child, but wait—at least wait—until we have had our little private talk together."

Lucilla bent her head a little under the rebuke either in acquiescence or to conceal some slight confusion ; but Valeria blushed hotly and unmistakably, and everyone looked constrained except the Canon, who looked rather severe, rather grieved, and at the same time perfectly serene. When he spoke again, it was with marked suavity.

"Tell us something of your literary work, dear fellow," he requested Quentillian. "I am ashamed to say that I have read nothing of yours, as yet. My time is so little my own. Lucilla here is our literary critic."

He placed his thin, beautiful hand, for a fleeting moment upon his eldest daughter's hand.

"Lucilla tells me that she knows your work. Critical essays, is it?"

i

"Yes, sir."

Quentillian gravely acknowledged the truth of the assertion. His self-consciousness rather enhanced than diminished in him a keen appraisement, perhaps rather less detached than he would have liked it to be, of his own literary value.

"I published a small volume of essays before the war, but since then I have only been a very occasional contributor to one or two of the reviews."

"Ah, yes. You must let me see what you have done, some day. This is the era of youth. Indeed, some of the things I see in print today strike me as not only crude and immature, but absolutely mischievous—false, foolish, shallow teaching from those who have never submitted to be taught themselves. I am not afraid of that in your case, Owen. But remember this, all you young people: Nothing can be of real or lasting value that is not founded upon the broad principles of Christianity—charity, self-sacrifice, humility, lovingkindness. One feels that, more than ever, nowadays, when cynicism is so much in fashion."

The Canon leant back in his chair again with his eyes closed, as though momentarily exhausted by the extraordinary passion with which he had spoken. So profoundly did Owen Quentillian disagree with his host, that he remained absolutely silent. He re

minded himself that since his majority he had sought, voluntarily, only the companionship of those whose views were at least as progressive as his own. He had almost forgotten that those other, older, views existed, were held with a passion of sincerity contrasting oddly with the cool, detached, carefully impersonal logic that was the only attitude contemplated by himself and his kind for the consideration of all problems of ethics, morals, or of Life itself.

No doubt the Canon did not admit the normal evolution of the art of self-sacrifice to be self-advertisement, and held the officious pelican to be the best of birds.

Quentillian, horribly aware of his own priggishness, wanted to reform the whole of the Canon's philosophy at once.

Nevertheless he retained enough humour to hope that the preposterous desire had not been apparent in his silence.

His eyes met those of Valeria Morchard, and read there amusement, and something not unlike protest. Lucilla, in her level voice, offered him tea.

"The cup that cheers," said Mr. Clover in a nervous way.

The ineptitude roused in Quentillian a disproportionate sense of irritation and renewed his old conviction that his nerves were not even yet under his complete control.

As though the Canon, too, were mildly averse from such trivialities, he began to speak again.

"What one feels in the cleverness of the day is the note of ugliness that prevails. Do you not feel that? The sordid, the grotesque, the painful—all, all sought out and dwelt upon. That, we are told, is the new realism. We know, indeed, that there is a sad side to life, but is it realism to dwell only upon one side of the picture? Surely, surely, a sane optimism were the better outlook—the truer realism."

"You don't think, then, that the optimism of England is responsible for her present plight, sir?"

Quentillian's tone was one of respectful suggestion, but he was aware that Val, beside him, had suddenly caught her breath as though at an audacity, and that Flora and Mr. Clover were both gazing anxiously at the Canon.

A flash of lightning shot from those ardent eyes straight into the passionless irony of the younger man's.

"But for England's optimism, there would be no England today. It was the spirit of optimism that won the war, Owen."

A sick recollection of men, armed and disciplined, taking steady aim at other men, standing against a wall to be shot for cowardice or treason, of grey-faced commanders leading those who followed them into certain death, all surged into Quentillian's rebellious mind. They, the men who had been there, had known better than to prate of optimism.

They had faced facts, had anticipated disaster, had envisaged the worst possibilities, and their pessimism had won the war.

"Are you, too, bitten with the folly of the day?"

The Canon's voice was gentle again, his arm once more laid across Quentillian's shoulders.

"Did I not hear something about shell-shock, dear fellow? We must have no talk of the war here.

Thank God for that He hath brought it to an end.

Tell me, dear lad, will you play tennis?"

Bewildered, almost affronted, Quentillian yet agreed to play tennis, feeling himself more like a forward boy, being treated with forbearance, than like a modern intellect illuminating the way of thought for the older generation.

He played with Valeria as his partner, and found the Canon's eulogy of her service to be entirely justified.

He found an opportunity at the end of the game of expressing his admiration for her play, and she replied, conventionally enough, that she had a great deal of practice.

"There isn't much else to do," she added, with a slight grimace.

Under pretext of looking for a distant ball, they continued the conversation.

"If you remember this place at all," Val said, "you know how dull it is. Just tennis in the summer, and horrible bazaars and jumble sales, and never a new person or a new idea from year's end to year's end."

"It sounds appalling. But, after all, you're not bound, in the old, antiquated way. You can go away."

"No I can't," she said bluntly. "I did get to France, for six months, during the war, but it was only because it was the war. And even then—oh, well, the sort of letters I got were enough to make me feel that Father really hated my being there."

Quentillian was genuinely aghast.

"But I thought that sort of attitude had gone out with all the other Victorian traditions. I thought women did what they liked—were as free as men."

"That's what it says in the books I read, and what some of the girls I met in France told me. But it isn't like that here. And one can't hurt Father. You know what he's like—so good, and so sensitive, and— and so noble, somehow. He makes modern things seem trivial—vulgar, even."

"Your father is a reactionary," said Quentillian kindly, rather as one might say: "Your father is a Hottentot."

"You mustn't think that he just wants us to stay at home and arrange the flowers," Val said. "You know how he always wanted us to have intellectual interests. Oh, Owen, don't you remember the collections?"

She broke off, and blushed and laughed.

"It seems so very natural—I've so often thought of you as Owen."

"That was very nice of you, Val," said Quentillian calmly.

He had every intention of retaining his early privileges, where Val was concerned.

"I should like to read some of the things you've written," she said abruptly. "Lucilla reads your articles, and has always admired them."

It seemed to Quentillian so extremely natural that anybody who read his articles should admire them, that he was conscious of receiving a slight shock when Valeria added:

"I gather that Father wouldn't like them at all. Lucilla always kept them out of his way."

"She is devoted to him, I can see that."

"Yes, of course."

Something in her voice made him look at her, and she exclaimed, half laughing and half petulant: "We're all devoted to him, Lucilla and Flossie and I ! I didn't mean the least shadow of a criticism of him. Only that it's a little difficult, sometimes, to keep up to his level."

It seemed to Quentillian so monstrous a state of affairs that the Canon's three daughters should have no worthier aim in life than the one implied, that something of his feeling was reflected in his face, and Valeria on the instant applied herself to looking for the missing ball, found it, and returned to the teatable and the group there.

The Canon was again speaking, this time to young Cuscaden.

"If it is to be Canada, I believe I could give you one or two introductions that might be of service to you. The Government people, for instance. ... I have one or two very good friends amongst them. You are really anxious to leave the Army and try colonization ?"

"Quite determined to, sir."

"Ah, you young fellows, you young fellows! It seems to me that there is none of the spirit of stability that existed in our day! But perhaps the wish to see further afield is a natural one. Certainly, my own greatest regret is that I have had so little time for travelling."

He turned to Lucilla.

"Your dearest mother and I had planned a visit to Italy the very year that she was taken from us. Well, well ! It was not to be. I shall never see the Eternal City now, I imagine, except with the eyes of the mind. Clover, you are amongst those who have seen Rome. Think of it! Seen Rome, where Peter healed and Paul preached the Gospel, where Laurence and Agnes and Cyprian and countless others were martyred ! Tell us something of the Coliseum."

Mr. Clover did not give the effect of being an eloquent person, but he had evidently been called upon before by the Canon, and he gave a not unilluminating little description, punctuated, and indeed supplemented, by Canon Morchard's exhaustive comments.

Quentillian listened in a sort of amazement, not at all untinged by a rather uncertain wonder as to how he should ever sustain his own part in these ingenuous conversations. . . .

The others, he saw, listened, with the possible exception of Lucilla, whose eyes were fixed Upon a distant flower-bed.

Captain Cuscaden kept his gaze upon Valeria, but he put in an occasional question, generally upon a subject of architecture. Flora played with a leaf and said nothing at all, and Val, unconsciously, Quentillian felt sure, repeated everything her father said in more colloquial English.

"It amazes me to realize that with a lack of all our modern appliances, such veritable giants of architecture should yet have been raised," mused the Canon.

"Yes, isn't it wonderful to think they had none of our machines and things, and yet made those enormous

statues and gates and things?" said Val.

"Well for us, indeed, that they did so, my child.

Every fresh excavation proves to be a new link with the past."

"Yes, indeed," said Mr. Clover.

"Yes, all the new things they dig up seem to make a fresh link with those old Roman days," echoed Val faithfully.

"Yes, indeed," said Mr. Clover.

"If any of you young people followed the accounts of the recent Egyptian excavations—Valeria, I think you are our keenest antiquarian—were you not struck by the extraordinary confirmation of Scripture narrative afforded by each fresh discovery?"

This time Mr. Clover only said "Indeed?" and Valeria repeated:

"Yes, it all carried out the things one reads in the Bible, didn't it?"

"We required no such confirmation, certainly, but it comes to one as a fresh joy, and brings these things home with full force."

And Mr. Clover, with what Quentillian perversely chose to regard as misplaced ingenuity, once more found a variation of his formula, and remarked, "Indeed, yes."

On these lines they talked about Egypt.

Then they talked about Rome again.

Then they went back to Egypt.

Quentillian looked at the rebellious profile beneath Val's shady hat, and came to the conclusion that, whether she fully realized it or not, she was as profoundly bored as himself.

It was Captain Cuscaden who released them from the strain, by rising to take his leave.

"I'm sorry you have not seen Adrian. He will be disappointed to have missed you," Canon Morchard said courteously. "Another day, when Adrian is at home, you must come over again. He is spending the afternoon with friends at a distance, and will hardly be home before dinner-time. You must come over again."

"Thank you, sir. I should like to very much."

Something in the Captain's prompt reply convinced Quentillian that his acceptance was not merely a conventional one.

"Your motor-bicycle is round by the hall door," said Valeria, and she and Captain Cuscaden left the garden together.

"And now, dear lad, you and I must have some talk together."

Rather to Quentillian's dismay, the firm and genial pronouncement of his host seemed to have been anticipated. Lucilla could be discerned bending over the distant flower-bed which had been the object of her solicitation during the talk about Rome, and Flora had disappeared. Mr. Clover now turned and hastened towards the house.

"You and I have had our heart-to-heart talks before now, Owen," said the Canon affectionately. "We must have many more of them, dear fellow—many more."

(iii)

The natural instinct of Quentillian, as of everybody else, was to suppose that a heart-to-heart talk must necessarily be upon the subject of himself.

He was therefore slightly disconcerted, though also undoubtedly relieved, when he perceived that the Canon's thoughts were only preoccupied with his own two sons.

They disposed of David with a rapidity that was partly due to Quentillian's own determined

uncommunicativeness, and partly to the Canon's evident anxiety to get on to the topic of Adrian.

"I wish David had been able to come home before returning to India, but no doubt these things are ordered for us. He writes fondly and affectionately, dear boy—fondly and affectionately. Not as often as I could wish, perhaps, but the young are thoughtless. It costs so little to send one line to those who are anxiously waiting and watching at home! Well, well—it has been a great joy to hear that the dear fellow is his own bright self. And his faith, Owen? Is all well there? Did he say anything to you of that?"

"No, sir."

The Canon sighed.

"Perhaps it was not to be expected. You of the present generation do not discuss these things as we did. Even at Oxford, I am told, the men no longer preoccupy themselves with such questions in the same way."

"Some do, sir," said Quentillian, beginning to feel rather sorry for the Canon.

The Canon, however, received Quentillian's consolatory effort very much at its true worth.

"Some do, perhaps, as you say, but they are not those from whom any very valuable contribution to the problems of the times is to be expected. The tone of Oxford is not what it was, Owen—not what it was. It lessens my disappointment at not sending Adrian there, to find an Alma Mater indeed, as his father before him. One had always thought of the Church for him, dear boy, but these things cannot be forced. His soldiering seems to have put an end to any leanings that way. Adrian is one reason, amongst many others, why I am glad to welcome you amongst us, Owen. He may find it easier to discuss things with a contemporary," said the Canon wistfully. "Your own destiny, I imagine, is sealed?"

Quentillian assented, although he had thought of the very small property recently inherited by himself in no such grandiloquent terms.

"When do you take possession of your kingdom?"

"In a few months, sir. The place was let during my uncle's lifetime, and there are repairs to be done before I go there. I intend to live there, and try my hand at farming."

He purposely omitted any mention of his writing.

"Good—good—excellent indeed. And we shall not be very distant neighbours, eh?"

"Just the other side of the county, sir. I should like to go over there from here, if you're kind enough to put up with me for two or three days."

"By all means, of course—but let there be no talk of two or three days, Owen, between you and me. Make this your headquarters ; come and go quite freely, as one of ourselves. We have always thought of you as one of ourselves," said the Canon warmly. "I think you have no very close ties, this side of the Great Division?"

"Thank you very much indeed," said Quentillian, feeling unable to accept the Great Division even by implication, but sincerely grateful for the Canon's most genuine and spontaneous kindness.

"It's more than good of you to receive me so kindly, and I shall be only too glad to take you at your word."

He wished that his self-consciousness had allowed him to make this speech without a perfectly clear realization that he only did so because the normal economy of expression habitual to him would have left the elder man dissatisfied.

As it was, the Canon's arm was, for the second time that day, affectionately laid across Quentillian's shoulders, and thus they paced the garden and eventually entered the house, to the extreme relief of the Canon's unresponsive prop.

"Your room, dear Owen. Lucilla is my housekeeper. Ask her for anything you want," said the Canon, carrying Quentillian back to his ninth year, and almost making him expect to hear next that Valeria was the Canon's tomboy.

No such inapposite piece of information followed, and Quentillian expressed his pleasure at the very charming room in which he found himself.

"Make it your own, dear lad, for as long as you will," and, as though irrepressibly, the Canon added as he closed the door : "Bless you."

At dinner, Quentillian saw Adrian Morchard. He thought him very like his sister Val, and also very like the little boy who had rehearsed aloud colours for each day of the week.

Adrian spoke of Quentillian's writings, said that he had read some of them, and was instantly and silently disbelieved by the author. The subject was not pursued.

In the drawing-room, later on in the evening, Flora played the piano, and although Quentillian was no musician, he had sufficient knowledge to understand that Flora was one. She played Bach, at the Canon's request, and Debussy at Adrian's. The Canon admitted, with a slight, grave smile, that he did not admire Debussy.

Valeria occupied herself with needlework, but Lucilla sat with her hands folded until her father said gently :

"Are we to see none of your great tomes tonight, my dear?"

Lucilla rose, and her father explained to the guest: "There are certain references for a small compilation that I may one day attempt, which Lucilla is kindly looking out for me. You remember her as a very scholarly little girl, no doubt."

The nearest thing Quentillian could compass to this was a very distinct remembrance of having listened to several of the novels of Sir Walter Scott, read aloud by Lucilla, and the Canon looked very much pleased at the reminiscence.

"We are not without our literary evenings now," he declared. "There have been some very pleasant

readings and discussions round the lamp on winter evenings. Lucilla provides me with some absorbing book, and Valeria has her strip of embroidery there, and Flora is busy with her pencil. I enjoy a pleasant evening of reading aloud."

The present occasion was not, however, one of reading aloud; nevertheless, Quentillian had none of the talk with Valeria that he had half-hoped to have.

The Canon's attitude towards his family circle was patriarchal. He sat in an armchair and talked a great deal to Quentillian, and his eyes rested with grave satisfaction upon his children, grouped round him.

They remained there until half-past nine, when the Canon read prayers to the assembled household.

"We break up early," he said afterwards to Quentillian. "Lucilla and I have work to do—she is always my right hand. Valeria and Flora, I believe, discuss mysterious questions of chiffons upstairs. Don't prolong the conference too late, though, my dears. I heard voices last night as I came upstairs, which was not as it should be—not as it should be. Owen, dear boy, Adrian will look after you. Good-night to you all."

The Canon kissed Val and Flora each on the forehead and laid his hand for an instant upon either head with a murmur that was evidently an habitual nightly blessing.

Then he went into his study with Lucilla, and Adrian and Quentillian sat in the smoking-room making desultory conversation that bore not the slightest resemblance to the wise, deep talks of the Canon's forecastings.

The forecastings of the Canon, in fact, like those of many other dominating personalities, were scrupulously carried out in his presence, and thankfully allowed to lapse in his absence.

As of old, it was only Lucilla who was completely at ease in her father's company, and Quentillian presently came to the conclusion that her silence, her unemotional acquiescences, denoted a mind that was merely a reflection of his.

Flora, remote, gentle, preoccupied with her music, gave him the odd illusion of being slightly withdrawn from them all.

Only in Valeria were to be discerned suppressed, but unmistakable, flashes of rebellion, and with Valeria, Quentillian, as usual scrutinizing his own impressions under a microscope, presently suspected himself of falling quietly in love.

In common with most young men of his day, Quentillian considered himself to have outlived passion. In effect, the absorbing episode of his young manhood was in fact over, and Val, ingenuous and beautiful, was provocative of the normal reaction.

One night she joined Adrian and Quentillian in the smoking-room, after the Canon's usual disappearance into his study.

With a look half-frightened and half-mischievous, she lit a cigarette.

Adrian laughed.

"Don't look so guilty, Val. It isn't a crime, and besides, no one will know."

Val coloured in a childish way, and said to Quentillian :

"My father knows that I smoke—at least, I think he knows, in a sort of way. He doesn't like it, and that's why I don't do it in front of him," she concluded naively.

"You're wrong, Val," said Adrian. "You and Flossie ought to assert yourselves more. It would make it much easier for me, if you did. Father's ideas about women are so old-fashioned, one can't introduce him to any of one's friends."

Quentillian exchanged a glance with Valeria. It required small acumen to translate the plurality of Adrian's "friends" into the singular, and the feminine singular at that.

"Father is very broad-minded," said Valeria conscientiously. "He never says that smoking is wrong; only that it's unfeminine."

"It isn't anything of the sort," Adrian declared with the most astonishing violence. "Some people—girls—require it for their nerves. It soothes them. It doesn't make them in the least unfeminine. I met a girl the other day—you'd have liked her awfully, Val—and she simply smoked perfectly naturally, the whole time, just like a man."

"Who was she?" inquired Val smoothly.

"Let me see—what was her name now?"

This time Quentillian avoided Valeria's eyes, positively abashed by the extreme hollowness of Adrian's pretence at forgetfulness.

"Oh, yes—Olga Duffle—Miss Olga Duffle. She is staying with the Admastos—the people I was with the day you arrived, Owen. Don't you think you girls might ask them all over to tennis, one of these days?"

"I suppose so—yes, of course we will. Would

Father like Miss Duffle? He doesn't much care for the Admastons, does he?"

"Absolute prejudice, my dear girl. You've got into a rut, all you people down here—that's what you've done. You'd like Olga most awfully—everybody does. She's the most popular girl in London, and not a bit spoilt, although she's an only child and her people adore her. Mrs. Duffle told me herself that Olga was just like a ray of sunshine at home."

"What an original woman Mrs. Duffle must be," murmured Val.

"I always think there must be something remarkable about any girl, if her own nearest relations speak well of her," Quentillian said in detached accents.

Adrian looked suspiciously at his audience.

"You'd like Olga awfully," he repeated rather pathetically. "And I can tell you this, Val, she'd give you and Flossie no end of hints about clothes and things. She dresses better than any girl I've ever seen."

Valeria was roused to no display of enthusiasm by this culminating claim of Miss Duffle on her regard.

"What sort of age is she?"

"She looks about eighteen, but I believe she's twenty-four and a bit," said Adrian with some precision. "She plays tennis, too, rippingly. You'd better ask the Admastons to bring her over, I can tell you. It isn't everyone who gets the chance of playing with a girl like that."

"We might have a tennis party next week," Val considered. "I shall only ask one Admaston girl; we've too many girls as it is. One Admaston, and this Olga person, and Lucilla and I—Flossie won't play if any body very good is there. That's four, and then you and Owen and Mr. Clover—and we could have Captain Cuscaden. I'll talk to Lucilla about it, if you like, Adrian."

"Oh, I don't care about it. It's for your own sake, really, that I suggested it," Adrian explained. His forefinger carefully traced out the pattern stamped upon the leather arm of his chair, and he contemplated it earnestly with his head upon one side, even murmuring a sub-audible—"One—two—three—and a corner"—before clearing his throat.

"H'm. No, my dear Val, don't run away with the idea that I'm wildly keen on this tennis stunt for my own amusement. In fact, I may say I've been a bit off tennis lately, simply from seeing how extraordinarily good some amateurs can be. It discourages one,

in a way. But I thought you girls might like to know Olga, I must say. She'd be an awfully nice friend for you to have, you know."

There was a pleading note discernible in the tone of Adrian's philanthropic suggestions that might have been partly accountable for the tolerance with which his sister received them.

Nevertheless, she said to Quentillian next day, with a certain hint of apology :

"We've spoilt Adrian, I'm afraid. You remember what a dear little boy he was?"

Quentillian remembered better still what a tiresome little boy Adrian had been, but this recollection, as so many others connected with the house of Morchard, he did not insist upon.

"I suppose he must have his Olga if he wants to, but I hope she's a nice girl. You know how very particular Father is, and I think he's especially sensitive where Adrian is concerned."

"It struck me that perhaps he was almost inclined to take Adrian's affairs too seriously," Quentillian suggested, with great moderation. "Adrian, after all, is very young, isn't he, both in years and in character, in spite of his soldiering?"

"I suppose he is. He's very susceptible, too. I sometimes think that Father doesn't altogether make allowance for that."

Even the very negative criticism implied was so contrary to the spirit of the house that it gave Quentillian the agreeable illusion of partnering Valeria in a mild domestic conspiracy, and pleased him inordinately. The sense of conspiracy was deepened on the day of the tennis party, when a Miss Admaston, gawky and unimpressive, duly escorted Miss Olga Duffle to St. Gwenllian.

She was less pretty, and possessed of more personality, than Quentillian had expected. Very small and slight, her face was of the squirrel type, her eyes very large and dark, her black crepe hair brushed childishly away from her little round forehead, her nose unmistakably retroussé. Two very white front teeth were just visible, resting upon an habitually indrawn underlip. Quentillian, quite irrationally, immediately felt certain that she spoke with a lisp. She did not, but she certainly pronounced the name of Captain George Cuscaden, with whom she appeared to be upon intimate terms, as though it were spelt "Dzorze." She also called Adrian by his first name, but gave

no other startling signs of modernity. Indeed, a very pretty, and most unmodern, deference marked her manner towards Canon Morchard.

"Father likes her," Valeria murmured to Quentillian, who was more concerned with her charming air of imparting to him a secret than with Miss Duffle's conquest of the Canon.

It was only at tea-time that the Canon joined the tennis party. Immediately afterwards he made courteous apologies and returned to the house.

It was undeniable that the absence of the Canon caused the conversation, which had circled uneasily round cathedral subjects, to lapse into triviality. The super-critical Quentillian could not decide which form of social intercourse he found least to his taste.

"Jam?" said Adrian.

The Canon had said, a few minutes earlier:

"You must try some of our strawberry jam, Miss Duffle. My daughter Flora is responsible for it, I believe. Lucilla there is our housekeeper, but I am given to understand that her younger sisters are allowed to try experiments. I will not quote: *Fiat experimentum*."

"Jam?" repeated Adrian.

"Oh, there's a wasp in the jam ! Oh, save me !"

Olga laughed as she uttered little cries of alarm, and her laughter really suggested the adjective "merry."

"Save the women and children!"

There was much ineffectual slapping of teaspoons against the air, the tablecloth, the jam pot, and many exclamations.

"Yonder he goes ! Passed to you for necessary action, Miss Admaston !"

"Be a man, Cuscaden; he's right under your nose."

"Dzorze, do be careful—you'll get stung!" Olga cried across the table.

Captain Cuscaden neatly captured the wasp beneath an empty plate.

"That's got him. He'll never lift up his head again."

"Oh, then may I have my jam?"

Olga, with her head on one side, might have been imitating a little girl, but Quentillian could not decide whether or no the imitation was an unconscious one.

"The wasp has eaten all the jam," Adrian rejoined in the same tone as Olga's.

"Oh ! he hasn't eaten all of it."

"No, he hasn't eaten it all."

"Oh! the wasp didn't eat all the jam, did he?"

"Not quite all."

"There are still a few spoonfuls left that the wasp didn't eat, Miss Duffle."

Neither Olga, Adrian, Captain Cuscaden, Flora nor Miss Admaston appeared to regard themselves as being amongst the extremest examples of brainless fatuity produced by a fatuous century. Yet thus it was that Owen Quentillian was regarding them, whilst at the same time another section of his brain passionlessly registered the conviction that his nerves were still on edge and his tendency to irrational irritability passing almost beyond his own control.

After tea he remained idly in a long chair beside Valeria, while they watched Olga's little nimble figure on the tennis court, where Adrian was her partner. Lucilla played against them with George Cuscaden, and Olga several times called out gaily: "Dzorse, I hate you!"

When Lucilla sent an unplayable stroke across the net, she only cried: "Oh, well played!"

"I don't like her voice, do you?" Val murmured confidentially.

"Hideous," said Quentillian, briefly and candidly.

"I wonder if Adrian thinks he's in earnest. Of course, I don't suppose she'd look at him. And of course he couldn't think of marrying anybody for ages. He's too young, and he'd have to get a job."

"He'll have to do that anyway, won't he? He says he doesn't dislike the idea of business, and I could give him an introduction to a man who might be useful."

"It's very kind of you. I know Father wants to get him settled. Dear Father, he was so disappointed that Adrian isn't going into the Church after all, and he's taken it so beautifully."

Quentillian regarded the Canon's disappointment with so much more astonishment than sympathy that he wished only to avoid a discussion on the beauty of its manifestation.

"Curiously enough, I have a living in my gift, be longing to my very small property at Stear. The old man there wishes to retire, and I want to consult your father as to a new appointment. No one could be less fitted than myself," said Quentillian with an emphasis not altogether devoid of satisfaction, "to nominate a candidate for that sort of thing."

Val looked at him with all her peculiar directness of gaze.

"Sometimes you talk as though you rather despised

the Church," she said bluntly.

There was a pause.

"If I have given you such an impression, I must apologize. It was most discourteous of me," said Quentillian stiffly.

He was fully prepared to acknowledge and to defend his own purely rationalistic views, but the implication of a lack of taste in his behaviour as guest in an orthodox household offended him.

"I didn't mean that," said Val, calmly and gravely.

"I know that a great many very clever people are not believers in the sense that my father is one, for instance; but they do respect the Christian ideal, all the same. I only wondered whether you were one of them. Do you mind my talking like this?"

The relentless voice of Quentillian's inner monitor assured him that he was, on the contrary, ready to welcome any intimate discussion of himself and his views, on whatever subject.

Val looked at him expectantly.

"Where I differ from, for instance, your father, is in separating Christian morality from what might be called the miraculous element of Christianity. Frankly, I can't accept the latter."

"You don't believe in the divinity of Christ?"

Her voice was a very much shocked one, and Quentillian replied only by a gesture. Val kept silence, and presently he glanced at her face and saw that tears stood in her eyes.

He was half touched and half impatient.

"Surely that point of view isn't altogether a new one to you. You must know that the trend of modern thought is all very much in that direction."

"I suppose I knew it, certainly. But it has never come very near me before. Father has sheltered us from everything, in the most beautiful way."

She spoke very simply and sincerely.

The time-honoured cliché as to never wishing to deprive anyone of his or her faith—Valeria least of all—hung unspoken on his lips.

If the spiritual intimacy of which Owen Quentillian was beginning to dream should come to pass between them, he was quite clearly and definitely convinced that Valeria's early beliefs must go.

"Have you really never felt any doubt at all—any inclination to question?"

Valeria looked troubled.

"I suppose I've never thought it out very clearly.

One doesn't, you know, brought up as we were."

Her eyes were full of thought.

"Tell me," said Quentillian gently, after a silence.

"I was hoping," said Val, with innocent eyes turned full upon him, "that Father would never know about you. It would make him so unhappy."

(iv)

Val, in accordance with time-honoured tradition, nightly brushed out her long brown hair in her sister Flora's bedroom.

They talked desultorily.

"Choir practice tomorrow. I wish we could have Plain Chant instead of those things. ..."

"Father doesn't care for Plain Chant."

"I know."

"Give me a piece of ribbon, Flossie. I've lost all mine."

"Val—here, will blue do?—Val, do you think Owen is falling in love with you?"

"I don't know. Well, to be honest, I think he is."

"So do I."

"That's Lucilla going up to bed. How early they are tonight."

They heard the Canon's voice upon the stairs outside.

"Good-night to you, my dear daughter. May God have you in His keeping!"

Then came a gentle tap upon the bedroom door.

"Not too prolonged a conference, little girls! I have sent Lucilla to seek her bed."

"Good-night, father," they chorused.

"Good-night to you, my dear children. Good-night, and may God bless you."

"Father would be pleased."

Flora reverted, unmistakably, to the topic of Owen Quentillian.

"I suppose so," said Val doubtfully.

"But you know he would! He is delighted with Owen, and it would be so close to us—only an hour's journey. I think it would be very nice, Val," said Flora wistfully, "and it's time one of us got married. Lucilla won't, now, and nobody ever asks me, so it had better be you."

They both laughed.

"Nobody has ever asked me, except that curate we had before Mr. Clover, and I always thought he was more or less weak-minded," Valeria remarked candidly.

"They may not have asked you, but they've wanted

to," said Flora shrewdly. "Don't answer if you'd rather not, but didn't Captain Cuscaden ever . . . ?" Val crimsoned suddenly.

"No. That was all nonsense. I believe he's in love with that Olga girl."

"After you? Oh, Val!"

"I don't suppose it was ever me at all," said Val with averted head. "I can't think why we've ever imagined such nonsense. Anyway, it's all over now, and I—I think I rather hate him, now."

"Oh !" Flora's tone was both highly dissatisfied and rather incredulous.

"One can't hate a person and—and like them, at one and the same time," Valeria exclaimed, with all the vehemence of those who affirm that of which they are not convinced.

"I suppose not. See if you can untie me, Val—I've got into a knot."

There was silence, and then Valeria, without looking at her sister, suddenly said :

"Sometimes I wish we'd been brought up more like other people, Flossie. I know Father's care for us has been beautiful—dear Father!—but somehow the girls I was with in France seemed more alive, in a way. They knew about things. ..."

"Isn't that rather like Eve wanting the knowledge of good and evil ? Father always says that one should only seek the beautiful side—'whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are holy,' like St. Paul says."

"Owen wouldn't agree to that. He believes that one ought to know everything, good and bad alike."

"Perhaps it's different for a man."

"Perhaps. We don't know much about men, after all, do we, Flossie?"

Flossie raised her eyebrows with an indescribable effect of fastidious distaste, and closed her lips.

"I don't think I want to, particularly. Father is the most wonderful man that anyone could ever want to know, I should imagine."

"Oh, yes," said Valeria.

She was perfectly conscious of speaking anything but whole-heartedly.

She did indeed think her father wonderful, but she could not, like Flora, feel herself to be forever satisfied by the contemplation of parental wonderfulness.

"You're different since you came back from France, Val. I think you'd better marry Owen," said Flora calmly. ^

"He hasn't asked me, yet."

There was a sound from the floor below.

"That was Father ! He. hates us to sit up late. I'd better go before he comes up again. Good-night, Flossie."

"Good-night."

Flora looked at her sister, and once more murmured :

"Father would like it, you know," half pleadingly and half as though in rebuke.

"Father doesn't know everything about Owen. He has been very much affected by the tone of the day, as Father calls it. His faith . . ."

"Oh, Val! Isn't that one reason the more? You might do so much to help him."

Flora spoke with humourless and absolute earnestness.

"Valeria!"

The Canon's voice, subdued but distinct, came to them from without.

"My dear, go to your room. This is not right. You are acting in defiance of my known wishes, although, no doubt, thoughtlessly. Bid your sister good-night and go."

Val did not even wait to carry out the first half of the Canon's injunction. She caught up her brush and comb and left the room.

"Are my wishes so little to you, Valeria?" said her father, standing on the stairs. "It costs so small an act of self-sacrifice to be faithful in that which is least!"

"I'm sorry, Father. We both forgot the time."

"Thoughtless Valeria! Are you always to be my madcap daughter?"

His tone was very fond, and he kissed her and blessed her once more.

Valeria went to her own room.

She sat upon the side of her bed and cried a little.

Everything seemed to be vaguely disappointing and unsatisfactory. What if Owen Quantillian was in love with her? He was very clever, and Val was tired of cleverness. Father was clever—even Flora, in her austere, musical way, was clever. Val supposed grimly that she herself must be clever, if imposed intellectual interests, a wide range of reading, a habit of abstract discussion, could make her so. Nevertheless she was guiltily conscious of desires within herself other than purely academic ones.

Flora was right. Those six months in France had

made her different.

She had worked in a canteen, where the preoccupation of everyone had been the procuring and dispensing of primitive things—food, and drink, and warmth.

Women had worked with their hands for men who had been fighting, and were going to fight again.

Valeria had been the quickest worker there, one of the most efficient. The manual work, the close contact with material things, had satisfied some craving within herself of which she had not before been actively conscious.

She had learnt to cook and had become proficient with astonishing ease. Scrambled eggs interested her more than herbaceous borders, more than choir practices, more, to her own surprise and shame, than evening readings-aloud at home.

The canteen jokes, elementary, beer-and-tobaccoflavoured, had amused her whole-heartedly. She had laughed, foolishly and mirthfully, for sheer enjoyment, knowing all the time that, judged by the criterion of St. Gwenllian, the jests were pointless, the wit underserving of the name.

Very soon she had ceased to dwell upon any remembrance of the criterion of St. Gwenllian. She had let herself go.

There had been brief, giggling intimacies with girls and young women whom Valeria could certainly not visualize as intimates in her own home, allusions and catchwords shared with the men or the orderlies, childish, undignified escapades which she was aware that the Canon would have regarded and apostrophised as vulgar. Those days now seemed like a dream.

Even the girl with whom she had shared a room for six months no longer wrote to her.

She, the bobbed-haired, twenty-two-year-old Pollie Gordon, had had love-affairs. Valeria remembered certain confidences made by Pollie, and still blushed. Pollie had been strangely outspoken, to Miss Morchard's way of thinking, but she had been interesting—revealing even.

Valeria ruefully realized perfectly that Pollie Gordon, whether one's taste approved of her or not, had lived every moment of her short life to the full. She was acutely aware of contrast.

"And I'm twenty-seven!" thought Val. "I'd better go and be a cook somewhere. If only I could! Or marry Owen—supposing he asks me. Anyway, one might have children."

A humorous wonder crossed her mind as to her ability to cope with the intelligent, eclectically-minded children that Owen Quentillian might be expected to father.

"It's a pity he isn't poor. I believe I should be better as a poor man's wife, having to do everything for him, and for the babies, if there were babies. . . . The Colonies, for instance. ..."

Although she was alone, Val coloured again and tears stood in her eyes.

"What a fool I am!"

It was this painfully sincere conviction that sent her to seek the oblivion of sleep, rather than any recollection of the fidelity in that which is least, enjoined upon her by her father.

For the next few days Valeria was zealous in gardening and tennis playing. She also, on two occasions, fetched volumes of Lamartine and asked her father to read aloud after dinner.

Her physical exertions sent her to bed tired out, and made her sleep soundly.

It surprised her very much when Lucilla, who never made personal remarks, said to her:

"Why don't you go away for a time, Val? You don't look well."

"I'm perfectly all right. I only wish I had rather more to do, sometimes."

Valeria looked at her elder sister. She was less intimate with her than with Flora. No one, in fact, was intimate with Lucilla. She spoke seldom, and almost always impersonally. At least, one knew that she was discreet. . . .

Val, on impulse, spoke.

"Do you suppose—don't be horrified, Lucilla—do you suppose Father would ever think of letting me go away and work?"

Lucilla gave no sign of being horrified.

She appeared to weigh her answer before she replied.

"I don't think it would occur to him, of his own accord."

"Oh, no. But if one asked him? Would it make him dreadfully unhappy?"

"Yes," said Lucilla matter-of-factly.

Valeria, disappointed and rather angry, shrugged her shoulders.

"Then, of course, that puts an end to the whole thing."

Lucilla finished stamping a small pile of the Canon's

letters, laid them on the table, and placed a paper weight upon the heap before turning round to face her sister.

"But why, Val?"

"Why what?"

"Why neell it put an end to the whole thing? You know as well as I do that it would make Father unhappy for any one of us to suggest leaving home. But if you really mean to do it, you must make up your mind to his being unhappy about it."

"Lucilla!"

Lucilla did not elaborate her astounding theses, but her gaze, sustained and level, met Valeria's astonished eyes calmly.

"You don't suppose I'm as hideously selfish as that, do you?"

"I don't know what you are. But you've a right to your own life."

"Not at anyone else's expense."

Lucilla began to stamp postcards.

"Lucilla, you didn't mean that, did you?"

"Of course I did, Val."

"That I should hurt Father, and go away just to satisfy my own restlessness, knowing that he disappointed and was unhappy? I should never know a moment's peace again."

"Well, if you feel like that, I suppose you won't do it."

"Wouldn't you feel like that, in my place?"

"No, I shouldn't; but that's neither here nor there. It's for you to decide whether a practical consideration or a sentimental one weighs most in your own particular case."

"Sentimental?"

Val's indignant tone gave the word its least agreeable meaning.

"It is a question of sentiment, isn't it? Father likes to have you at home, but he's not dependent upon you in any way."

"But wouldn't he say that my place was at home—that it was only restlessness and love of independence . . . ?" Valeria stammered.

She suddenly felt very young beneath the remote, passionless gaze of her sister. For the first time in her life she saw Lucilla as a human being and not as an elder sister, and she was struck with Lucilla's strange effect of spiritual aloofness. It would be very easy to speak freely to anyone so impersonal as Lucilla.

"It's ever since I got back from France," said Val suddenly. "I don't know what's the matter with me, exactly, but I've . . . wanted things. I've wanted to work quite hard, at things like cooking, or sweeping—and I've been sick of books, and music, and botany. I don't feel any of it is one scrap worth while. And, oh, Lucilla, it's such nonsense, because no one wants me to cook or sweep, so I'm just 'seeking vocations to which I am not called,' as Father always says. Perhaps it's just that I want change."

Lucilla was silent.

"Do say what you think," Val besought her with some impatience.

"I will if you like, but it isn't really what I think, or what Father thinks, that matters. It's what you think yourself."

Valeria stamped her foot.

"I don't know what I think."

"Better go away," Lucilla then said briefly.

"Work?"

"Yes, if that's what you feel like. Of course, marriage would be better."

"Lucilla."

"You asked me to say what I thought," her sister pointed out.

"I suppose you mean Owen Quentillian," Val said at last. "But even if I did that—and he hasn't asked me to, so far—it would only mean just the same sort of thing, only in another house. There'd be servants to do the real work, and a gardener to do the garden, and a nurse for the babies, if there were babies. Owen talks about farming Stear, but he'd do it all out of books, I feel certain. We should be frightfully—frightfully civilized."

"Owen is frightfully civilized."

"Well, I don't think I am," said Val contentiously.

"Lucilla, do you like Owen?"

"Yes. I'm very sorry for him, too."

"Why?" Valeria could not believe that Owen would be in the least grateful for Lucilla's sorrow. It might even be difficult to induce him to believe that anyone could be sufficiently officious to indulge in such an emotion on his behalf.

"I think his shell-shock has affected him much more than he realizes," Lucilla said. "I think his nerves are on edge, very often. He'd be a difficult person to live with, Val."

Valeria remained thoughtful.

She knew that Lucilla's judgments, if rarely put into words, were extraordinarily clear-cut and definite, and as such they carried conviction to her own intuitive, emotional impulses of like and dislike.

"Father likes Owen so much. Wouldn't he be pleased if one ever did?" Val said elliptically.

"Very pleased, I should think."

"Of course, that isn't really a reason for doing it."

Lucilla apparently found the wisdom of her sister's observation too obvious for reply.

"Not the only reason, anyway."

Lucilla's silence was again an assent.

"Gossiping in the morning, my daughters?"

The Canon's deep, pleasant voice preceded him as he paused outside the open window.

"Is that as it should be? Lucilla, my dear love, at your desk again? You look pale—you should be in the open air. Is not the day a glorious one? When this world about us is so unutterably fair, does it not make one think of 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, what things He hath prepared for them that love him'?"

The Canon's uplifted gaze was as joyful as it was earnest.

"Heaven seems very near, on such a day," he said softly.

Val, always outspoken, and struggling with the unease of her own discontent, joined him at the window and said wistfully :

"I can't feel it like you do, Father. I wish I could."

"Little Valeria! It will come, my dear; it will all come. These things become more real and vivid to us as life goes on. So many of those I love have gone to swell the ranks of the Church Triumphant, now—such a goodly company of friends! How can I feel it to be a strange or far-away country, when your mother awaits me there, and my own dear father and mother, and such a host of friends? What a meeting that will be, with no shadow of parting any more!"

Valeria was conscious of foolish, utterly unexplained tears, rising to her throat at the tender, trustful voice in which her father spoke.

How she loved him! Never could she do anything that would hurt or disappoint him. The resolution, impulsive and emotional, gave her a certain sense of stability, welcome after all her chaotic self-questionings and contradictory determinations.

"Will you give Owen and myself the pleasure of your company this afternoon, Valeria? We meditate an expedition to Stear—an expedition to Stear."

She said that she would go with them.

None of the Canon's children had ever refused an invitation to go out with the Canon since the days when the Sunday afternoons of their childhood had been marked by the recurrent honour of a walk with Father. An honour and a pleasure, even if rather a breathless one, and one that moreover was occasionally liable to end in shattering disaster, as when Flora had been sent home in disgrace by herself for the misguided sense of humour that had led her, aged five, to put out her tongue at the curate. Or that other unforgettable episode when Val herself, teased by the boys, had vigorously boxed Adrian's ears.

She smiled as she recollected it, and wondered if Owen remembered too, and yet there was a sort of disloyalty in recalling the affair too closely.

The Canon had been so very angry ! His anger, as intense as it was memorable, had been succeeded by such a prolonged period of the blackest depression ! Val realized thankfully that it was a long time since any of them had seen the Canon angry.

She turned aimlessly down the garden.

The Canon had already gone indoors. He was never other than occupied, and Valeria had never seen him impatient of an interruption.

"The man who wants me is the man I want," the Canon sometimes quoted, with his wonderfully attractive smile.

"Father is wonderful. Never could I disappoint or grieve him," thought Val vehemently.

She suddenly wheeled round and returned to the open window, determined that Lucilla, the astonishing Lucilla, should know of her resolution.

"You know what we were talking about just now?" she demanded abruptly.

Lucilla looked up.

"I've quite made up my mind that your advice was wrong," said Val firmly. "I know you said what you thought was best, and it's nice of you to want me to be independent, but, after all, one's duty comes first. I don't believe it's my duty to dash away from home and make Father unhappy."

Lucilla looked down again.

"Of course, if anything happened of itself to make me leave home, it would be quite different. If I mar

ried, or anything like that. But just to go away for a purely selfish whim "

She paused expressively.

"I couldn't do it, you know."

"Well—" Lucilla's tone conceded, apparently, that Val had every right to judge for herself. Further than that, it did not go.

"Lucilla, if you really think like that, about living one's own life, and I suppose from the aggravating way in which you won't say anything, that you do— why don't you do it yourself?"

"But I haven't any wish to," said Lucilla, looking surprised.

"Haven't you ever had any wish to?"

"Oh, yes, once. But not now."

"Then why didn't you?" Val pursued desperately. She felt as though she was coming really to know her sister for the first time.

"I suppose because I thought, like you, that it wouldn't do to leave Father."

"But you don't think that any more?"

"No."

"Did anyone advise you?"

"Oh, no. There wasn't anything to advise about. One has to think things out for oneself, after all."

"Oh!" Val was conscious of her own perpetual craving for approval from everyone, for any course that she might adopt.

"Did you ever ask anyone's advice, Lucilla?"

"I don't think so. If I did, it would be because I meant to take it, and I can't imagine wanting to let anyone else decide things for me. Just talking about one's own affairs isn't taking advice, though people like to call it so."

"I think it's a very good thing you're not married," said Val crossly. "You're too superior."

"Perhaps that's why no one has ever asked me," said Miss Morchard with calm.

Valeria, in spite of her momentary elevation of spirits in resolving never to grieve her father, prepared for the visit to Stear in a discontented frame of mind. At the last moment Adrian suddenly announced a wish to accompany them.

"My dear! But of course—" The Canon's pleasure was very evident. "Owen, you will welcome this lad of mine as part of our little excursion, eh? Why not make one of the old-time family parties? Why not let us all go and explore this future home of

Owen's? It's not very often that I have a free afternoon nowadays—and to have all my dear ones to make holiday with me would be indeed a rare joy."

He looked round him expectantly.

"The caretaker won't be able to manage tea for so many," said Lucilla, looking at Quentillian.

"There speaks my practical housekeeper !

For though on pleasure she was bent,

She had a frugal mind.

"Eh, Lucilla? Could you not contrive a basket for us, my dear, picnic fashion? Come, come, let's have an impromptu picnic. What say you, young people?"

They said what the Canon wanted them to say. No one, Val felt, could have done otherwise, in the face of his eagerness. She was partly disappointed, and partly relieved. There had been a certain romance in going with Owen to see Owen's home, with the barely acknowledged wonder whether it might not one day also be hers.

But there was no hint of romance in the solidly packed basket presently produced by Lucilla, and reluctantly carried by Adrian, nor in Flora's tardiness that nearly caused them to miss the train, nor in her Father's gentle, humourously worded rebuke to her.

(v)

If Valeria was slightly discomposed by the tribal nature of the expedition to Stear, Quentillian was seriously annoyed by it. He had figured to himself a grave and gentle readjustment of values, when he should see the place that he had known since boyhood transformed into a setting for the figure of Valeria. He did not suppose himself to be tempestuously in love, but he had made up his mind that he greatly wished to marry Valeria.

A wistful uncertainty possessed him as to whether Valeria would wish to marry him.

Stear looked forlorn and uninhabited, and the repairs were even less advanced than Quentillian had expected them to be.

He reflected that he ought to be upon the spot, and shuddered involuntarily, and to his disgust, at the lonely prospect.

Since his shell-shock, he had very often been afraid of his own company, and the knowledge was peculiarly galling to him.

"Your lines have fallen to you in pleasant places, Owen," said the Canon genially.

"You are optimistic, sir," said Quentillian rather

dryly. "It will be months before these men are out of the place."

"You should move in yourself," Lucilla suggested.

"I believe I should."

"Thoughtless Lucilla ! Why should Owen leave his present quarters, if he is happy with us, as I trust he is? Aye, dear Owen, you are very welcome at St. Gwenllian whilst your own nest is being prepared for you."

The Canon's ready hand sought Quentillian's arm. Owen glanced at Lucilla half apologetically, but her gaze, impervious to subtleties, and mildly cheerful, met his very readily.

"Please stay on with us, if you should care to."

"Thank you," said Quentillian non-committally.

Later, at the Canon's suggestion, he took them to visit the church.

"You will one day have the responsibility of finding a new shepherd for the flock here, I understand, Owen."

"I shall hope for some advice from you, sir."

"Aye, indeed? It's a very good living, is it not?"

Though that is very far from being the first consideration—very far, indeed."

"What's it worth?" Adrian inquired.

"I believe it's considered worth about £700 a year."

"A job for a married man," said Adrian casually.

An involuntary flash of amused comprehension passed between Quentillian and Valeria. He understood it to be in reference to this when she said to him in a low voice on leaving the church :

"I don't think Olga Duffle would make a clergyman's wife, do you?"

"I should doubt it."

"But Adrian couldn't really be thinking of it."

"I thought he'd decided against the Church."

"So he has. I think it was one of the greatest disappointments Father has ever had."

"Your father would only have wished it if Adrian had wished it."

"Oh, yes," said Val emphatically. "Naturally, he looks upon it as a question of vocation. Father is the last person to ignore that."

She hesitated, and then said : "Owen, do you believe that everyone has a vocation?"

The question, to him so oddly reminiscent of the perplexities of a bygone age, nearly made him laugh, but his amusement was wholly tender.

"I don't believe in a special vocation straight from Heaven for each one of us," he admitted. "You know, I never can believe that Heaven takes that acute personal interest in individuals that religious people always emphasize when they're talking about themselves. But, of course, there are certain lines of development "

"I think," Val said seriously, "that I should like to feel I had a definite job in life, that no one but myself could do. I feel so—indefinite."

"I believe I might enlighten you on that subject," Owen replied in measured accents.

"I don't mean Sales of Work or a botanical collection, Owen."

"I know you don't. The sales of work and the collections were never a means of self-expression, were they?"

"They did stand for something, though."

"For your wish to please somebody else?"

"The wish is still there, Owen."

"Val, you know I think self-abnegation is all wrong."

He was half-laughing, but the flushed face that she turned towards him was altogether earnest.

"Don't think me arrogant, Val, but I do so wish I could make you see it as I do. Don't you see that the Christian ideal of self-sacrifice was only the swing of the pendulum, from the brutal old days when men rejoiced in seeing their fellow-creatures tortured and killed? Feelings had to be developed, and so the Sermon on the Mount was preached. The pendulum has swung too far the other way now—charity has come to mean self-advertisement or sentimentality."

Quentillian, deeply interested in his own exposition of views that were by no means new to him, was brought up short by a call from behind him.

"Hi, Owen ! Are you walking for a wager? I want to ask you something."

Quentillian, not at all disposed to welcome Adrian and his interrogations, was obliged to slacken his steps as Valeria did hers.

Adrian was swishing at the long grasses on either side of the road with a slender length of ash.

"Look here, old man, have you got anybody in your eye for that living?"

Adrian's head was studiously turned towards his depredations with the ash-stick.

"Because if you haven't—not that it matters to me, particularly, you understand, but I've got a friend, who might be the man you want."

"Who is he?"

"I should have to sound him first," Adrian explained.

"I suppose you'd want a youngish fellow and—and I suppose you'd rather he was married?"

"Not in the least."

Adrian looked disturbed.

"I thought a parson's wife was useful in a large, straggling sort of place like this. Not that it matters to me."

"Is your friend married, Adrian?" Val enquired.

Quentillian could not decide whether the simplicity of her manner was ironical or no.

"He isn't married at present. I think he's engaged. You see, a living like this would justify a man in getting married, wouldn't it?"

"It would depend on the sort of person he wished to marry."

"Supposing she had a little money of her own?"

"The sort of girls who marry clergymen never do have money of their own," said Quentillian, firmly. On this discouraging pronouncement, they were re-joined by the rest of the party.

Nevertheless Valeria contrived to enquire of Quentillian, in a disturbed murmur:

"What can Adrian be thinking of?"

It was not at all difficult to guess what Adrian could be thinking of, and became still less so as the days slipped by and his infatuation for Miss Olga Duffle led to her inclusion in innumerable games of tennis and impromptu tea-parties at St. Gwenllian.

"What can he see in her?" Valeria demanded, after the fashion of sisters.

Quentillian was unable to provide any adequate explanation of the phenomenon, but he was fully prepared to discuss it, and prolong thereby the sense of intimacy with Valeria.

It seemed to Quentillian that a new, slight, tinge of gravity shadowed Valeria's frankness.

With all the logic and consistency of most persons so situated, Quentillian alternately viewed this as being hopeful or unhelpful, in the extreme, for the fulfilment of his wishes.

He was slightly amused at finding himself in the extremely conventional position in which he had so often viewed, with dispassionate distaste, the spectacle presented by other men, and this amusement was not without its share in determining him to submit his proposal to Valeria in writing.

A tendency, real, or fancied by Quentillian's selfconsciousness, on the parts of Flora and Adrian at least, to vacate any room in which he and Valeria might be, upon excuses of a shadow-like transparency, finally brought Quentillian to the point of leaving St. Gwenllian, under promise of an early return.

"You must come back, to us, dear Owen—you must come back," the Canon repeated. "I want many a talk with you yet, and Adrian here will miss the evening confabulations in the smoking-room—eh, Adrian? Stear will hardly be ready for you yet awhile, to our advantage be it spoken, so you must make your home with us in the meanwhile. Come and go quite freely, dear lad."

"Thank you very much."

Quentillian felt that he had already said these words all too often, and conscientiously sought to vary the formula.

"It's been a delightful time altogether, and I'm more than grateful. It's been wonderful to get such a kind welcome after these years abroad."

"Ah, dear fellow!"

The Canon's fine face softened as he laid his arm across the younger man's shoulders.

"Never doubt your welcome here, Owen," he said.

Owen suspected significance in the words, and then derided himself.

Whatever his certainties as regarded the Canon, it was with Valeria that Quentillian was concerned, and he could augur nothing from her frank and cordial regret at his departure.

"I shall write to you, Val."

"Yes, do. And I'll tell you what happens with Adrian and that Olga."

"I hope nothing will happen."

"Oh, no—but it's amusing."

She did not look amused. Something of her ripeapricot bloom had faded, and there were shadows beneath her brown eyes. Before he left St. Gwenllian, Owen said rather earnestly to Lucilla that he thought Valeria looked tired.

"So do I."

"Is she ill?"

"I don't think so."

"I should hate to think of her being ill."

"I don't think she's ill, Owen."

Lucilla evidently accepted his solicitude as a natural thing.

"I've always thought that Val needed a greater outlet for her energies than she gets here. She's very strong, really, and she did splendidly in France when she was working so hard at her Canteen. I wish she could go away and work again."

"Really?"

"Don't you think so yourself?"

"Perhaps—if she wished it very much. There are other things besides work, though," said Owen Quentillian.

"Well—" Lucilla's favourite monosyllable held, as usual, a sound of concession.

"Couldn't one do anything for her—take care of her, somehow?"

"I will order a cup of beef-tea for her at eleven o'clock," said Lucilla with seriousness, but with amusement lurking in her eyes.

They parted upon a mutual smile of excellent understanding.

Quentillian thought that he liked Lucilla, with her impersonal calm, and her unquestioning acceptances. He wrote to Valeria from London, letters that he felt to be self-conscious, and received uneloquent replies. He had left St. Gwenllian a fortnight when he finally composed an epistle that left him a little—a very little—less than profoundly dissatisfied with his own powers of composition. He received her reply by return of post.

"Owen, dear, I've got your letter. I can't answer it in the way I should like to, making you understand everything that I mean. But do understand first of all that your thinking of me like that makes me very proud, and I wish I was more worth it all.

"I'm glad you loved some one else before, and thank you for telling me. The reason I'm glad is because I used to like some one very much myself once, but it wasn't like yours, it was only my own foolishness, and never came to anything. But I think perhaps it's prevented my falling really in love, because, dear Owen, I am not in love with you. If I married you, it would be because you are, as you say, very lonely, and because I am very, very fond of you, and also perhaps, a little, because it would make Father so happy. But none of those reasons are the real, true reason for marrying, are they?"

"We have known one another so long, and understand one another. Can't we discuss it honestly together, before settling anything? Either way, we are always friends, so I will sign myself your friend."

"Valeria Morchard."

Quentillian read the letter with a strange mingling of disappointment, relief, and mortification.

Nevertheless it was in all sincerity that he wrote to Val of his admiration for her candour.

"You and I are moderns, my dear. Let us, as you wish, discuss the future impersonally, but let me first of all say that when—or if—ever you should come to the decision which I want you to come to, then so far as I am concerned, philosophical discussion will go for nothing. I shall wait for your sign, Val, and if it comes, there shall be no more pen and ink between us, but a meeting for which I long with all my heart."

"Academic," said Owen's inner monitor, relentless as ever.

He posted his letter in spite of it.

It was with relief, and yet with a happiness less defined than he had expected it to be, that Quentillian found himself engaged to Valeria.

He regretted his own absence of ardour, and was all the time aware of a faint, lurking gratification at having so early outlived the illusions of passionate emotion.

He returned to St. Gwenllian.

This time it was Valeria who met him. Something in the simplicity with which she accepted their new relationship touched him profoundly, and rendered of no account his own temperamental subtleties.

It was with a deepening sense of sincerity that Quentillian said to her :

"You have made me very happy, dearest." "

"I'm glad, Owen. I'm happy too."

Her hand lay trustfully in his.

"They want to see you so much, at home, Owen.

I've told them. They're all so pleased."

It evidently added to Valeria's content, that it should be so.

"You know that Father has always really looked upon you as another son, even in the days when you and I got into trouble for playing at Greek sacrificial processions with the guinea pigs on silver salvers."

They laughed together at the recollection.

The Canon had not been hard upon the classically minded delinquents.

Quentillian believed himself to have realized fully the adjuncts, necessary and fitting in the eyes of the Morchard family, but to himself distasteful in the extreme, of his engagement to Valeria.

He was prepared for conventional congratulations, for the abhorrent necessity of discussing his personal affairs, for an emotional absence of reticence that would differ as widely from his own impersonal, dissectingroom outspokenness as would the Canon's effusive periods from Quentillian's cultivated terseness of expression.

Nevertheless, he was less well-armoured, or more severely tried, than he had expected to be.

Canon Morchard seemed to shower welcome, blessings, congratulations upon him. He said:

"Dear lad, you and I must have a long talk together, at no distant date."

They had many.

It seemed to Quentillian that he saw more of the Canon than of Valeria, in the days that ensued.

"Val, when will you marry me? I'm quite selfish enough to want you to myself," Quentillian said to her with firmness after a week at St. Gwenllian that seemed to him to have been mainly differentiated from his last visit there by the increased number of one-sided talks with the Canon to which he had been subjected.

Val said tentatively: "The end of January?"

"Why not before Christmas? Stear should be quite ready for us by then."

It relieved him with a strange intensity to know that he would not, after all, go alone to Stear.

Valeria looked at him, and although her voice when she spoke was serious, a certain mischievous amusement lurked in her eyes.

"Before Christmas, it's Advent," she said.

"Advent?"

"I don't think Father would like my wedding to be during Advent, at all."

"I see."

"Oh, don't be vexed, Owen. It's only a month's difference after all."

"It isn't that," began Quentillian candidly, and then shared in her slight, unoffended laughter at his lack of gallantry.

"I only mean, my dear, that I don't like to see you bound by that sort of convention. Do you really think it can make any difference if we're married on one particular date rather than another?"

"I'm thinking entirely of Father," gently said Val, thus altogether evading the real point at issue.

Quentillian was again and again made aware of this

capacity in Val for the avoidance of any discussion between them on the subject of religion.

It was as though the faint rebellion that he had discerned in her at her own way of life had been extinguished by the mere prospect of its coming to an end. Nor, when he finally forced an issue, did Val appear to possess his own capacities for impartial, essentially impersonal, discussion.

"Can't we leave it alone, Owen? You told me what your views were—and you know what mine are. We've been honest with one another—isn't that all that matters?"

"In a sense, of course it is. You don't think that perhaps it's a pity to know there's one subject we must tacitly avoid—that we can't discuss freely?"

He spoke without emphasis of any kind.

"•It is a pity, of course," said Val literally. "But how can we help it? I can hardly listen to you without disloyalty of the worst kind. If you look at it from my point of view for a moment, you do see that, don't you, Owen?"

"Yes, I suppose I do see that," he said heavily.

He felt strangely disappointed and disillusioned.

"Do you wish me to say anything to your father about that?"

Val blushed deeply, but spoke quite resolutely.

"No, I don't. I've thought it over, and I can't see that it concerns anyone but you and me. Lucilla says so, too. I asked her what she thought. It's not as though I were eighteen, and it's not as though I didn't trust you, absolutely, not to interfere with my beliefs, any more than I with your—unbeliefs."

Confronted with her grave trustfulness, no less than with the obvious justice of her words, Quentillian could only agree with her.

His rather arrogant conviction of earlier days, that Val's beliefs must go, gave place to an unescapable certainty that they would not even be modified. Rather would Valeria, enforced by tradition and by the inherited faith that was in her, expect with the course of years to influence her husband's views.

Owen felt strongly the hopelessness of such expectation, and still more strongly the inexpediency, not to say the impossibility, of urging that hopelessness upon Valeria.

It was decided that the wedding should take place in January, and the engagement be made public just before Christmas.

"You do not want to let the world in upon your joy too soon, young people," the Canon told them with a grave smile.

Val's answering smile acquiesced in the assumption, as indeed the smiles and silences, no less than the spoken words, of his entire family were always apt to acquiesce in any assumption made by Canon Morchard, whether the facts warranted such acquiescence or not. The days slipped by, very much as they had slipped by before Quentillian and Valeria had become engaged. If Quentillian had expected a greater difference, a more profound element, he was destined to be disappointed. Val was charming and—he would not have to face loneliness at Stear.

Indeed at one moment, it almost appeared as though Valeria would not be alone in accomplishing the destruction of the spirit of solitude at Stear.

Adrian Morchard sought his prospective brother-in-law, and said, with singularly ill-chosen colloquialism :

"Tell me, old thing, have you had any talk with the governor about that living at Stear?"

"Not yet. The present incumbent hasn't even re signed."

"I suppose—ha-ha—you'll laugh—in fact I shouldn't be surprised if you thought it dashed funny—it makes me smile myself, in a way—you'll roar when I tell you what I'm thinking of."

Quentillian felt as melancholy as do the majority of people thus apostrophised, and was aware that his melancholy was reflected on his face in a forbidding expression.

Adrian had turned rather pale.

"You know the old man's always been desperately keen on my going into the Church? Well—I say, you can laugh as much as you want to, I shan't be offended •—I'm not at all sure I shan't do it."

Quentillian felt no inclination whatever to indulge in the prescribed orgy of merriment.

"You coming into the family like this, with a good living going begging, makes it a pretty obvious move in a way, doesn't it—and then it'd please the old man frightfully—and really there are precious few openings for a man who hasn't been brought up to anything special, nowadays."

"Yes. And what is the real reason?"

Adrian laughed uncomfortably.

"Sherlock Holmes ! Well, between ourselves, I don't mind telling you that I want to see some prospect of

being able to marry, and if I had a definite thing in view, like Stear, I might be able to bring it off."

"You can't be ordained in five minutes. Don't be absurd."

"I've got to wait, anyhow," said Adrian gloomily.

"She won't even be engaged, yet. I thought I might as well fill in the time at Cambridge or somewhere, if it's going to lead to something. I'm quite willing to wait if I must, and of course I shall never change."

"It's Miss Duffle, I suppose. I can't say I should have thought she'd enjoy the life of a country parson's wife."

"You haven't the least idea of what she's really like."

"Perhaps not." Owen's voice implied the contrary.

"What about yourself? Do you really suppose you could stand it?"

"Of course I could, if it meant her. My dear fellow, my mind's absolutely made up, I may tell you, and has been for—for days. But, of course," he added in genuously, "it does depend a good deal on whether you'll promise me Stear or not at the end of it all."

"What about your father?"

"Oh, he'll jump at it, of course. It's been the one wish of his heart, all along," said Adrian easily.

Quentillian wondered how it was possible that any youth, brought up in the intellectual atmosphere of St. Gwenllian, could be so entirely devoid of insight. To his own way of thinking, it was utterly incredible that Canon Morchard, ardent Christian and idealist, should contemplate with any degree of equanimity, his son's proposed flippant adoption of a vocation which he regarded as sacred.

Owen committed himself to no promises.

"I should like to talk it over with Val."

"I suppose if you must you must," said Adrian, grudgingly. "But don't let her tell anyone else."

Valeria's views were not far removed from Quentillian's own.

It sometimes, indeed, seemed to Owen that the identity of their points of view on every other subject only rendered more evident the deep gulf dividing them on the topic that Valeria had decreed should be a barred one—that of religion.

Spoken, their very difference might have brought them closer together. Unspoken, it seemed to Owen to pervade all their intercourse since their engagement as it had never done before.

(vi)

Valeria had been engaged for nearly a month when she wrote a letter.

"Dear Captain Cuscaden,

"I thought I would like to tell you myself that I am engaged to be married. It is to Owen Quentillian, whom I have known all my life, almost, and we hope to be married in January.

"I hope you will have very good luck in Canada, and that you will sometimes let us know how you get on. We are expecting you on Saturday, to come and say goodbye.

"Yours sincerely,

"Valeria Morchard."

Val spent a long while over the composition of her brief letter, re-read it a great number of times, and finally tore it up very carefully into small pieces.

"What's the use?" she said.

Captain Cuscaden, however, did not seem to have been dependent upon Valeria for news of Valeria's engagement. He congratulated her formally on the Saturday afternoon when he came to pay his farewell visit to St. Gwenllian.

Olga Duffle was there, too, and Miss Admaston.

"No more tennis this year. It's going to rain again," said Flora.

"Here it comes," Mr. Clover pointed out.

"It may clear up later—let's have tea."

After tea the rain was still falling heavily.

"How are all you young folks going to amuse yourselves?" genially enquired the Canon. "Lucilla, can you not organize some of our old jeux d'esprit, with pencil and paper?"

There was an inarticulate protest from the Captain, to which no one paid any attention except Valeria, who heard it, and Olga, who replied to it: "I'll help you, Dzorze, if you're very good."

Mr. Clover was zealous in finding paper and pencils.

"I can't resist this," said the Canon boyishly. "I must give some of my old favourites a turn before going to more serious affairs. Now what is it to be?"

No one appeared to be very ready with suggestions.

Captain Cuscaden was gloomily gazing out of the window. Olga and Adrian were talking in undertones, and Miss Admaston was telling Quentillian how very much she dreaded and disliked any games that required the use of brains.

"Are we all ready?" said Mr. Clover joyously.

"I suppose we're as ready as we ever shall be," said Captain Cuscaden.

Thus encouraged, they began.

Canon Morchard, Lucilla, and Owen Quentillian outmatched the rest of the players with ease. Each seemed to think with promptitude of great men whose names started with A, battles that began with M, or quotations—English—of which the initial letter was W.

They challenged one another's references, and verified one another's dates. They capped quotations, and they provided original bouts rimes.

The entertainment gradually resolved itself into one animated trio, with a faithful but halting chorus, in the persons of Mr. Clover and Flora, and a rapid and low-toned aside between Adrian and Miss Duffle. Captain Cuscaden played a listless game of noughts and crosses with Miss Admaston, and Valeria leant back in her chair and ceased to pretend that she was occupied.

She looked at the sapphire and diamond ring on her finger, and thought about Owen's cleverness. She remembered that Lucilla had said he would be a difficult person to live with. She remembered her own secret desires for a life of work, and her assurance to herself that such ambitions were out of place. She reminded herself that her father had been, in his own parlance, glad beyond words to welcome Owen Quentillian as a son. And she looked at Owen himself, and saw him intent, over his little slips of paper, and a sudden rush of tenderness came over her. His absorption in the game seemed to make him younger, and in more need of her. She could remember Owen as a flaxen-haired, solemn, rather priggish little boy, and she suddenly felt that perhaps he had not changed a very great deal since those days, after all.

Val felt happier, in a subdued and wistful way. She woke to the realization that the games were ended. The Canon had arisen.

"Look up that derivation, Clover, dear man, and let me have it. I shall be curious. . . . Fare ye well, young people, I recommend Lucilla here as a veritable dictionary of dates, if you wish to continue your amusement."

Nothing could have been more evident, the moment the Canon had left the room, than that no one wished to pursue amusement on the lines indicated.

Even Mr. Clover joined in the general movement

that thankfully relinquished paper and pencil, and sent everyone to the piano, flung open by Olga Duffle.

"Do play something," Adrian pleaded.

"Oh, not me. Make your sister play. She plays so much better than I do."

It was indubitably true that Flora played a great deal better than did Olga, yet nobody seemed to want Flora to play the piano, and Olga, even as she protested, slipped on to the music stool and ran her small fingers over the keys.

"I say, how well you do everything!" Adrian murmured ecstatically above her.

She looked up at him and smiled, showing all her little pointed teeth.

They clustered round her.

"Do you know 'Oh, Kiss Me and I'll Never Tell,' that comes in that revue—I forget it's name—the new one? It's lovely."

To the perceptions of Valeria Morchard, trained in the eclectic school of the Canon's taste, the musical inspiration in question was not only undeserving of being called lovely, but was vulgar to the point of blatancy, ringing through the St. Gwenllian drawing-room in Olga's little, high, soprano voice.

She was not at all surprised that Owen should look at her through his pince-nez with eyebrows expressively elevated, nor that Mr. Clover, presumably in a futile endeavour to spare the Canon's ears, should unobtrusively go and shut the door.

Val looked at Lucilla.

There was something not at all unlike amusement on Miss Morchard's face, but Val did not think that it was caused by the humour of "Oh, Kiss Me and I'll Never Tell." Rather it might have been born of a gentle irony, embracing alike the puzzled distaste of Flora, the obvious terror of the curate lest he should be supposed to be enjoying the entertainment, the absorption with which Captain Cuscaden, Adrian, and even Miss Admaston stood and listened, the supercilious detachment of Owen Quentillian, the complacent unconsciousness of the small, pert singer at the piano. No doubt Lucilla could have detected, had she cared to do so, the unspecified emotions that Val suspected of being written upon her own unsmiling face.

She felt suddenly impatient.

"We're all intolerable. Lucilla is superior, and Flossie takes this rubbish *cm grand serieux*, like a crime, and Owen is thinking how deplorable it is that

idiotic words should be set to inferior music, and put before the British public for its education. ... I can hear exactly what he'll say about it afterwards." It struck her that the anticipation scarcely boded well for a life that was in future to be spent in Quentillian's company.

"My dusky gal is black as coal

"But she's just the whitest, brightest soul."

carolled Olga.

"I love the darky girls, don't you?"

"Rather."

"Why does the English youth of today seek artistic inspiration from the uncivilized population of Central Africa, I wonder?" said Owen Quentillian. He addressed himself to Lucilla, but his very distinct utterance was perfectly audible to everybody else. Captain Cuscaden laughed, and Olga looked round with perfect good humour. It was Adrian who glared at Quentillian, and Mr. Clover who observed reproachfully:

"I'm sure those old plantation songs are charming, as Miss Olga renders them."

"You shouldn't be so superior, Owen," said Lucilla tranquilly.

It was what Val had been thinking, but she had found herself quite unable to say it, from the very intensity of her feeling.

Lucilla placed an old album on the music stand, and they all began to sing together "Comin through the Rye."

The music affected Valeria almost intolerably.

All the Morchards had good voices, and both Flora and Lucilla sang well. Their true, deep voices gradually dominated Olga's high pipe, and the four men sank to a mere murmur of accompaniment. Miss Admaston had never done more than crane over everybody's shoulder in turn in an endeavour to see the page at close quarters, and murmur the last words of a verse in an undertone when everyone else was singing the first line of the refrain. She was now altogether silent.

"Sing the Russian songs, Flora," said Quentillian.

Valeria pressed her hands closer together, and leant against the wall.

It was growing dark.

The air of the Russian song that Flora chose was wild and sweet.

"You are my darling, you are my soul

"Light of my life, my sun, my goal . . .

"You are my being, my delight

"Star of my darkest night."

Direct, primitive worship of one man for one woman : Flora's voice held all the passion that was not in her, save at her music.

The ache at Val's heart seemed to her physical in its intensity.

She knew what she wanted, now, and she knew that Owen Quentillian would not give it her.

To her own horror, a rush of tears blinded her.

"But all is well for thou art with me

"The world is full of only thee"

sang Flora.

"What is the matter?" said the low, troubled voice of Cuscaden beside her.

Val started violently.

"Val, you must tell me. What is it . . . ?"

They looked at each other.

It suddenly became the thing that mattered most in the world that Val Morchard and George Cuscaden should speak alone to one another.

Regardless of the rain pouring outside, Valeria gently opened the French window behind her.

"Come outside. I must speak to you," she said ur gently.

She had no idea what she was going to say.

Outside, in the rapidly gathering darkness, the rain fell in torrents and splashed up from the ground against the stone step of the low veranda that ran round the house.

Cuscaden stepped out of the warm room and closed the window again behind him. It was as though he had shut them out of the world of music and companionship, into some colder, more virile atmosphere.

"But all is well for thou art with me

"The world is full of only thee."

Flora's song reached them as faintly as possible, and neither heeded it.

They faced one another, and Val found that she was shivering from head to foot.

"Why do I never get a chance of speaking to you nowadays?" said Captain Cuscaden violently.

"You could have," said Valeria, and her voice broke. His arms went round her.

"Val, Val, I love you so."

It was as though Quentillian had never existed.

"And you're going to Canada," she wailed.

"You're coming with me."

"I must," Val said, and surrendered herself to his kisses.

"My daughter, how wet you are!" exclaimed the Canon.

His daughter, hastening to her own room, paused under the light of a lamp, and inadvertently thereby gave the Canon an opportunity of verifying his statement.

Val, beneath his astonished gaze, became acutely aware that her rain-wet hair was disordered, her face flaming, and showing all the marks of recent and violent weeping.

"What is all this?" the Canon enquired rather sternly.

Valeria felt utterly incapable of replying.

"Answer me, Valeria."

"Captain Cuscaden is looking for you," said Valeria almost inaudibly.

"Captain Cuscaden?"

"Yes."

They gazed speechlessly at one another.

A weight had descended upon the Canon's brow and the lines round his mouth were set sternly.

"Valeria, has he insulted you?"

The intimate conviction overwhelmed her that the Canon's opinion of her recent interview with Captain Cuscaden would certainly demand an emphatically affirmative reply to the enquiry. She felt a purely hysterical desire to burst out laughing at the thought.

"How is Captain Cuscaden concerned with you?"

If it is as I think, Valeria, you did well to refer him to me."

"But it isn't. He—I—we are both to blame, Father. I'm going to break off my engagement to Owen. I love George."

The words were said, and although Valeria broke into a flood of tears, it was with a sense of relief. Telling Owen that she did not intend to marry him after all, was, she honestly felt, nothing to telling the Canon so.

She sank down on the stairs and hid her face in her hands, afraid to face her father's realization of the implication that her words contained.

It did not tarry.

"Do you want me to understand that you are under a solemn engagement to marry Owen Quantillian, and that you have at the same time been allowing—en

couraging—the clandestine attentions of this—this fellow? You, my daughter, behaving like a wanton? I won't believe it—I can't believe it—" the Canon's voice rose violently. "Valeria, for God's sake tell me I'm mistaken—don't crouch there like a guilty creature—tell me I'm wrong, tell me you're the pure, honest maiden I've tried to make you and not—not—a creature without honour, without decency "

The rising note of anguish broke on a strangled sob. Below, a door was shut sharply.

"Get up," said the Canon with violence.

Valeria rose, and he pulled her to her feet and gazed searchingly into her face.

"And this is my child!" said the Canon, and in his turn dropped his face into his hands, groaning.

"I couldn't help it," she spoke between her sobs, like a child. "Owen knew I wasn't in love with him . . . only I never realized, I didn't know George cared, too—it was always him . . ."

"Stop!" thundered the Canon. "Are you without shame, Valeria? Is that fellow waiting for me down stairs, or has he crawled away as I should expect, from one who has so repaid my hospitality?"

The words gave Valeria a needed impetus.

"He is ready to meet you, Father—he went to find you. And I love him—I suppose I've been very dishonourable, but I—I believe Owen will understand."

She broke into tears again, and left him.

Overwhelmed with the sense of her own dishonour, regarding the Canon's wrath as might have a child, in the light of the greatest calamity that life could present, she turned with absolute relief to the thought of Owen's dispassionate judgments, his studiously impersonal attitude towards life. Owen would understand.

There came a knock at the door.

"Val, may I come in?"

"What is it?" said Valeria unwillingly.

Lucilla entered the room, unperturbed, but fully accepting the disordered aspect of its occupant.

"I'm afraid, Val, that the drawing-room door was open, and it was impossible to help hearing Father. I thought you'd rather know, in case you wanted to speak to Owen."

"Owen knows?" almost shrieked Valeria.

"I suppose he does. He must have drawn his own conclusions."

"I couldn't help it," said Val again. "I never meant anything like that to happen—it's George Cuscaden,

Lucilla. It was always him, indeed it was, only I didn't know it, and it all seemed to happen in a minute—it was stronger than either of us."

"I dare say you did quite right. Why don't you wash, Val?"

"Oh, Lucilla, how like you!"

Valeria laughed shakily, but she followed her sister's advice.

Lucilla methodically produced Val's brush and comb, and dry clothing.

"Maud Admaston and Miss Duffle have gone, and Adrian went with them. Mr. Clover has gone, too, so it was only Owen and Flossie and I that heard."

"What did he say?"

"He didn't say anything. Shall I fasten you up, Val?"

"Lucilla—what am I to do?"

"Tell Owen you can't marry him, and tell George you will marry him."

"I wish it was as simple as that ! You always take things so literally."

"Well," said Lucilla unmoved, "I don't see any other way of taking this. You can't be engaged to two people at once. You know—Owen will understand."

"That's what I feel," said Val to her own surprise.

"But Father—Father will never, never understand."

"Probably not. But after all, it's you, and Owen, and George, isn't it, that are concerned? I shouldn't let there be scenes and upsets about it, Val, if I were you—really I shouldn't. Why don't you just see Owen tonight, and tell him about it, and then you and he and George could all talk it over quietly tomorrow morning?"

Val was conscious of profound astonishment and also of extreme relief.

"Do you think one could? But Father "

"You needn't go downstairs again. I quite understand that you don't want to see Father again tonight. Shall I tell Owen to come up here?"

"Here? How could he, in my bedroom?"

"Goodness me, child, you may just as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, surely. But if you think it's so dreadful, I suppose you can come out on the landing and speak to him."

Impossible to disconcert Lucilla !

Val assented to the surprising propositions so matter-of-factly delivered.

"Yes, tell Owen to come up. I'd better get it over.
But Lucilla—George "

"Do you want me to see him, or give him a message?"

"I want to know what Father says to him," Val said faintly.

"Very well. I'll ask Father if George has gone."

'And, oh, Lucilla! I know you can't prevent it, really, but if only you could make Father not come up to me tonight! I can't bear any more—indeed I can't."

"Well," said Lucilla, "you'd better lock the door then." She took the key from the lock, put it on the inside of the door and tried it in a practical manner.

"That's all right. You can lock it on the inside as soon as Owen has gone."

She went downstairs, but turned and came up again the next moment.

"I'll have dinner sent up to you, shall I?"

"I don't want any."

"I should think you'd better have something, Val. I'll send up soup and chicken. The pudding is only ginger, and you know how badly she makes ginger pudding." Lucilla departed in earnest, upon this prosaic pronouncement.

She was succeeded by Owen Quentillian, and Val went out upon the landing to meet him.

"Will you forgive me, Owen? I can't marry you."

"What has happened?"

"I thought you knew," she said piteously.

"I suppose I do. Is it Cuscaden?"

"Yes."

"Then why," Owen demanded in reasonable accents, "couldn't he have proposed to you himself without waiting for you to be engaged to me?"

"He thought he couldn't ask me to go to Canada—and he's badly off—and then, when you came, he—he thought it was you I cared about."

"I see," said Quentillian dryly.

"I don't think I knew, exactly, that I still cared for him, and I was sure he hadn't meant anything, and it—it was really all over—only then—Flora's music, somehow—and he asked me what it was—and I cried. Owen, won't you forgive me? Surely it's better than if I'd tried to go on with it?"

"Of course it is."

They looked at one another rather helplessly.

"Val, if I can do anything to help you, of course

I will. What are you going to do ?"

"I can't think," said Valeria faintly.

"When does Cuscaden sail?"

"Next week."

"That's bad luck," said Owen impartially. "Look here, my dear, you must be tired out. Won't you go and sleep now, and in the morning we could see what's to be done?"

"Oh, how good you are !"

He frowned slightly.

"Surely the day of heroics is over. I haven't the slightest desire to exchange pistol-shots with Captain Cuscaden, I assure you. We are three reasonable human beings, and we find ourselves in a difficulty from which only clear thinking and absolute plain speaking can extricate us. You may believe me when I tell you that I am perfectly prepared to discuss the case upon its own merits."

Valeria could believe him without difficulty. Even in the midst of her distress, she could not altogether stifle a slight suspicion that Owen was appreciating the opportunity afforded him of being thoroughly modern and rational.

"Have you seen Father?"

"Not yet."

Quentillian's tone betrayed no great eagerness for the prospective interview.

"He is very, very angry with me, and I know he has every right to be. But indeed, Owen, I was coming straight to you, only I met him first, and it somehow came out. George was going to tell him."

"Your father has never liked Captain Cuscaden," said Quentillian meditatively. "I am afraid he will make things very difficult."

"I deserve it."

"Don't be absurd," said Quentillian, with severity.

"This is that foolish idea of atonement and repentance—and all the other cheap salves to the humiliation of having made a mistake. Don't you see that it's all waste of time and energy, Val? You ought to be thinking of what you're going to do next, and how you can do it with least wear and tear for us all. Life isn't a series of sins and punishments or virtues and rewards, as it is in one's nursery story-books. There are actions and their consequences—that's all."

She looked up at him, bewildered, and yet slightly relieved at perceiving that he still possessed the power of sententiousness.

"Only say you forgive me, Owen."

"If you wish it, my dear, of course. Please don't cry any more."

Valeria, however, crying more than ever, drew the sapphire and diamond ring from her finger and mutely held it out to him.

Owen gazed at it for a moment through his pincenez. Then he put it gently back into her hand again, and closed her fingers round it with his own.

"Please, Val."

Still holding her hand, he bent forward and very softly kissed her wet cheek.

"If we're not engaged any more, we've got to go back to what we were before—brother and sister, Val. Good night—don't cry any more."

The smile with which he left her was in his eyes as well as on his lips, and held nothing so much as very gentle amusement, and an affectionate concern.

(vii)

The amusement was no longer to be seen in the eyes of Quentillian, and the concern had no affinity with

affectionateness,

when he reached the door of the Canon's study.

He felt himself to be eleven years old once more, and in complete uncertainty as to the manner in which he might be received, after the discovery of some unwonted misdemeanour.

The thunderous voice that bade him come in did nothing to dispel the unpleasing illusion.

The Canon was sitting at the writing table, under the carved crucifix that hung against the green velvet plaque. A blotting pad, deeply scored with heavy black lines, lay beneath his hand, and a broken lead pencil testified to the energy with which that hand had sought an outlet for the feelings that presumably agitated its owner.

The Canon swung round in his chair as the door closed behind Quentillian.

"Owen, Owen!" "Hi"? -Voice broke. "My boy, how can I face you?" "*●●" ●●●

The Canon answered his owji. question by rising impetuously and leaning heavily, -upon Quentillian's shoulder, one hand across his eyes.

"My dear, dear fellow!"

His voice, charged with emotion, broke Horribly over each fresh ejaculation. ' . /,,< .

"My son—Owen—you've been nothing less to- me
—and now—treated like this—one of mine own house
hold—what can I say, what can I say?"

Quentillian longed heartily to implore the Canon to
say nothing at all.

"Won't you sit down, sir? I thought I'd better
come and talk to you, if I may."

"Anything, anything, dear lad. Have you seen my
unhappy child?"

"Valeria and I have agreed that we are no longer
engaged," said Owen carefully. "I don't consider that
I have been unfairly treated. She discovered, rather
before the eleventh hour, that she and Captain Cuscaden
were in love with one another, and it would have
been quite as unjust to me as to herself, if she had not
acted upon the discovery."

Canon Morchard gazed anxiously at the victim of
this neatly-analysed situation.

"For Heaven's sake, Owen, don't let yourself be
come bitter. It is so easy—so fatally easy, when one
is suffering. Take a stronger grip of your faith than
ever before, dear lad—remember that 'all things work
together for good.' One learns .to dwell upon those
words, and the meaning deepens into something so
unspeakably precious. . , \yl "

To Owen's relief the Garicn sank back into his chair
again. . . "

"I can offe* yoia.no atonement," he said presently,
with a deep "weariness in his voice.

"I am. "still" unutterably bewildered. How I have
failed, how I have failed, with my motherless girl !
. And. I thought I knew my child—my merry Valeria,
as I have called her from her babyhood—I thought I
knew her through and through! She to be dishon-
ourable, she to be heartless, she to attach herself to a
godless, brainless, mannerless fellow—and when a man
like yourself had received her troth! Owen, it is as
though mine own right hand had turned against me."
The Canon held out a trembling right hand and
gazed upon it.

"Where is Captain Cuscaden now, sir?" enquired
Quentillian, almost expecting to hear that the object
of his solicitude had been bound and cast into outer
darkness.

"Where!" Canon Morchard struck the table with
his clenched fist until the blotting-paper and the broken
pencil bounded again. "Where! I have dismissed
him, Owen. Does he think that I shall give my daugh

ter to one who comes like a thief in the night? There is such a thing as a righteous anger, and such an anger was mine then."

It seemed to be his still, Owen reflected, and boded ill for his own wish to discuss the situation impartially.

"Valeria is very unhappy, sir."

The Canon groaned.

"I can't trust myself to see her, to speak to her.

God knows that my place is with my unhappy child, but my shameful lack of self-control makes me tremble. I have been angry—I am angry still."

He looked piteously at Owen.

"I have thought to get the better of my devil with prayer and fasting, but the old Adam is strong—terribly strong. When I saw my child—my little Valeria—her eyes wild, her person disordered, dashing up stairs as might a shamed creature, to hide itself—when I realized the depths of her dishonour—Owen, it was in me to have struck her. I could have raised my hand against my own child !"

His head sank upon his breast.

Quentillian waited before making a further, strangely inadequate, contribution to the conversation.

"Do you think, sir, perhaps you may be taking this too seriously?"

Canon Morchard stared at him. Then he smiled grimly.

"Generous—very generous, Owen. But I am to be deceived by no such feint. I, who have had the care of souls these thirty years ! Do you think that, what ever front you may present to the world, my eyes—mine—are to be blinded ? Do you think that / do not know that the iron has entered into your soul ?"

The Canon's eyes were so extraordinarily piercing as they gazed into Quentillian's, that the object of his penetration sought in himself almost hopefully for some of the searing emotions attributed to him.

He discovered none.

Wounded in his vanity, annoyed, disappointed even,—but nothing more.

Owen, quite aware of futility, inwardly formed phrases of complete truthfulness, only to reject them.

"I assure you that I am not in the least unhappy at having been jilted by your daughter ... it leaves me quite cold ... I don't think I ever really wanted to marry Val very much ... we were much better friends before we tried to become en

gaged. . . ."

Or, with a yet more devastating candour :

"I've been certain for days that I made a complete fool of myself by ever proposing marriage to Valeria. . . ."

This surprisingly agile form of mental gymnastics was tempestuously interrupted by the Canon.

"For God's sake, Owen, break down!" he groaned.

"My boy, my boy, you're safe with me. Forget that I'm Valeria's father—think of me only as one who has known suffering—aye, and sin, too. Make a safetyvalve of me—let yourself go. But I can bear this sham cynicism of yours no longer. It's wrong, Owen, it's wrong. True fortitude faces what lies before it, finds its Gethsemane, and rises, purged of bitterness. Break down—weep, nay, curse if you will, only cast open the floodgates. Let loose whatever devils possess your soul, you, the victim of treachery—let them loose, I say, and we will conquer them together."

For an instant, all that Quentillian could do hardly sufficed to prevent his letting loose a violent fit of laughter.

He drove his teeth into his lower lip. It was his increasing perception of the Canon's overwhelming misery that steadied him.

"Val has hurt me less than you think, sir," he said gently at last. "I have sometimes thought that she and I had made a mistake."

The Canon gazed at him with a pathetic unbelief.

"My unhappy child does not know what she has lost."

"I hope she is going to be happy in her own way," said Quentillian.

The Canon's brow instantly became thunderous again.

"Not one word, Owen, not one word on those lines," he commanded sternly. "I appreciate your generosity deeply, but there is such a thing as carrying generosity too far."

"I can see small generosity in relinquishing to some one else what is no longer mine."

The Canon swept on, unheeding.

"My faith in my child has received a rude shock.

Valeria is unfit for wifedom and motherhood. How can I let her undertake responsibility when she has proved herself unworthy up to the hilt? No, Owen, let it rest there. / will deal with Valeria, and may God help us both !"

Quentillian felt inclined to echo the petition wholeheartedly.

He could not doubt that the Canon's misery was utterly unfeigned. So, also, was his wrath.

The incongruous sound of the dinner-gong vibrated violently through the room.

The Canon did not stir.

His voice, when next he spoke, was almost a groan.

"I cannot see Valeria tonight. God forgive me, I am not master of myself. Your calm shames me, Owen. But it is not natural, not natural. You will, and must, suffer for it later on. Tell me, dear fellow—that I should have to say it!—do you wish to leave us—do you wish to go?"

Owen wished for nothing so much as an immediate adjournment to the dining-room, but he felt that it would indeed be impossible to say so.

'You would not wish me to send Valeria from home, I know. Nor do I know where I could send her.'

"Let her marry Cuscaden," said Quentillian boldly.

"Never, Owen. Give my child—my weak, untrustworthy child, to a man who could behave as Cuscaden has behaved? Believe me, I appreciate the generosity that prompts you, but you know not what you ask—you know not what you ask."

Quentillian, entirely unaccustomed to any such accusation, was silently annoyed.

He was also hungry.

"I have sometimes thought," said the Canon with a trembling voice, "that my tendency has been to idolize my children. I lost their mother so early! You know how it was with me, Owen. Lucilla was my eldest born, my right hand. I have come to depend upon Lucilla, paradoxical though it may sound, from a father towards his child. David, my eldest son . . ." the Canon paused a long while, and then murmured softly : " 'Whilst he was yet a great way off'—David is in a far country, but he will return to us yet, and though his Morning Prayer be our Even song, who shall say that there is separation between us? And I have kept my other children by my side, Owen. Little Flora has never yet tried her wings away from home. She is more like her mother than any of them—she and the dear Adrian."

A smile like an illumination came into the Canon's eyes as he spoke Adrian's name. "The light of mine eyes, that dear lad has always been. My Benjamin!

There are no words for what I went through whilst Adrian was fighting, Owen. One could only remember in Whose keeping he was, and that all must be well, in reality. But all one's faith was needed—it must be so, with poor human nature. The soul goes through dark waters, Owen, as you are finding now." The protest which Owen almost automatically registered within himself at this interpolated reference to the despair which he could not feel, was necessarily a silent one.

"Valeria has been the brightest, the most lighthearted, of all my children. She is naturally gifted with high spirits, and she and I have made innocent fun together, have shared the humorous view of life, a thousand times. Have I allowed that gaiety of hers to turn to flippancy—that mirthful spirit to cloak a lack of principle? I ask myself again and again where in I have erred, for I cannot hold myself blameless, Owen. I have thought over my motherless children, I have prayed, and yet it has come to this—it has come to this !"

The Canon's head dropped back into his hands once more, and Quentillian felt as though this despairing round of anger, self-blame, self-pity, and genuine misery, might go on forever.

He glanced at the clock. The dinner-gong having failed of its appeal, it appeared as though nothing need ever interrupt them again.

"I will give him five minutes more, and then I shall stand up," Quentillian decided.

The Canon lifted a haggard face.

"Perhaps I had set my heart overmuch upon your marriage with my child, Owen. It may be so—it may be so. I may have forgotten that we poor mortals cannot, after all, see very far—that all plannings and schemings are very vain, seen by the light of Immortal Wisdom. If so, I am receiving my punishment now."

The Canon groaned again.

"I am at a loss how to act. I can decide nothing. I must see Valeria, but how can I do so until I can command myself?"

Even as he asked the question, the veins stood out upon the Canon's forehead, his nostrils quivered and his face became suffused.

"Three minutes more," Quentillian reflected.

"Owen, one thing I must ask. Has she asked your pardon ?"

"Yes, but indeed I don't think "

"No, Owen, no." The Canon raised his hand in instant protest. "Each generous plea from you, stabs me afresh. I ask myself if my unhappy child even knows what she has lost. I thought I knew Valeria through and through—that nothing in her nature was hidden from me, from her father. I have been strangely mistaken, indeed."

("Another half minute.")

"Am I harsh with her, am I harsh to my motherless girl? God knows that I was angry when I met her this evening, distraught-looking, crouching before me like a shamed and terrified Creature. I cannot even now fully understand what has occurred, but her own admission was that, engaged to you, she believed herself to love another man—that she had allowed him to make love to her."

Owen stood up resolutely.

"Aye, Owen, I do not wonder at it, if you seek the relief of movement. It is more natural so. I, too, in my day, have paced this room."

Quentillian, however, had no desire to pace the room except for the very few steps that would put him outside it.

He debated in vain within himself the most tactful method of making this clear to Canon Morchard.

"I suppose I have been blind. This blow has come upon me with fearful suddenness—I suspected nothing—nothing. How could I "

The door opened.

Quentillian looked round thankfully at Lucilla. She did not go up to her father, but spoke quietly from the door.

"Father, don't you think Owen should come to dinner?"

A quick frown drew the Canon's always formidable brows together.

"Since when do my children interrupt me in my own room, at my work, Lucilla?" he enquired.

Her face did not change, but she looked at Quentillian.

"Thank you," he said quickly. "I will come."

The Canon rose. His hand went once more to the resting-place now rapidly becoming habitual to it—Quentillian's shoulder.

"Do not let my foolish child impose her trivial urgencies upon you."

The Canon's other hand went out towards his daughter.

"Did I speak over-sharply, my daughter? Perhaps Mary was nearer my mood than Martha, just now—Martha, careful and troubled over many things. Go, then, children. Lucilla, you will come to me later. Until then, I do not wish to be disturbed again." With a heavy sigh, the Canon turned again to his writing-table.

Owen and Lucilla went out.

"He is terribly upset. Could he not be persuaded to come to dinner?"

"No, I knew he wouldn't want that. But I shall take in a tray when I go to him later. Sometimes, if he's talking, he eats without thinking about it. I was counting on that—and besides, he would have disliked my suggesting that he should come in to dinner as usual."

Lucilla's voice and her face alike were entirely guiltless of irony.

Quentillian followed her into the dining-room:

"The others have finished," Lucilla said. "Would you rather I stayed, or that I went?"

"Stay, please."

She sat down opposite to him at once.

"I wish your father were less angry with poor Val, although perhaps it is not my place to say so. But in his—his generous sympathy for me, I am afraid he has rather lost sight of what she must have been suffering."

"I don't think suffering, in my father's eyes, would ever condone what he considers wrong-doing."

The comment seemed to Owen to be rather an illuminating one.

"I suppose not. It may surprise you to hear that I do not, personally, consider that Canon Morchard is entitled either to condemn or condone whatever Valeria may have done."

"I quite agree with you."

Quentillian was less gratified than astonished at the assertion.

"Val herself would hardly agree to that."

"No."

"Well, but don't you see, Lucilla, how difficult that's going to make things? To my mind, the only natural proceeding is for Valeria and George Cusaden to marry and go to Canada."

Quentillian paused almost without meaning to, on a pronouncement that would certainly have met with drastic and emphatic interruption from Canon Morchard.

Lucilla, however, received it unmoved.

"Don't you think so?" said Quentillian, slightly disappointed.

"Yes."

"But will Valeria do it? Won't her strange ideas of filial duty interfere? I am absolutely convinced that one of the principal reasons for her ever becoming engaged to me, was her wish to please her father."

"I don't think it was altogether that, Owen. But you did ask her to marry you at a time when she was just beginning to realize that the sort of life she led before the war wasn't going to be enough for her."

"Need it have taken a European war to make her see that?"

The smile that Lucilla turned upon his petulance was disarming.

"Don't be so cross, Owen."

She might have been talking to a little boy.

"I think," said Quentillian with dignity, "that perhaps you forget it was only a few hours ago that I learnt how completely cheated and—fooled, I have been."

He could not avoid a recollection that the Canon would not have needed such a reminder.

"Indeed, I don't forget at all," said Lucilla earnestly.

"It must be very vexing for you, but—Owen, do forgive me for saying that I can't really feel as if you minded dreadfully. You're much too understanding, really, not to know that poor Val didn't wilfully cheat you, any more than she cheated herself. And I think you, too, perhaps, in another way, were beginning to feel that you'd made a mistake in promising to marry one another."

Lucilla, Quentillian realized half ruefully and half with amusement, had beaten him at his own game. Her unvarnished appraisal of the situation brought to it no more and no less than the facts warranted.

His answering gaze was as straight as her own.

"You're right," he said abruptly.

She held out her hand with a laden plate in it.

"Pudding?" she enquired, prosaically.

"Thanks."

He made an excellent dinner.

"But what will happen to us now, Lucilla?"

"Well, George Cuscaden will be here again, and that'll make Val feel better. And you'll help, won't you?"

"Certainly."

And, on the strange assurance, they separated. It was much later that Owen, from his own room, heard the door of the study immediately below him, open once more, and then shut.

Barely audible, but still unmistakable, he heard a steady stream of sound, rising and falling, easily to be identified as the Canon's voice.

"Good God, what more can he have to say about it?" reflected Quentillian. He was destined to ask himself the question again, for the sounds, punctuated by the briefest of pauses, doubtless consecrated to the delivery of laconic replies from Lucilla, continued far into the small hours of the morning.

Finally, after Quentillian had fallen asleep, he was roused by a gentle, reiterated knocking at the door. Only too well aware whose hand was responsible for those considerably modified taps, he rose and went to open the door, omitting the usual invitation to enter. As he expected, the Canon, unutterably pale and weary-looking, stood without.

"Dear fellow, I knew that I should find you awake. Owen, I could not but come to tell you that all is well with me now. I have forgiven, even as I myself hope—and need—to be forgiven. I will see Valeria to-morrow, and tell her that she has my full and free pardon. Together we will consider what is the best thing that we can make of this most unhappy business."

"And Cuscaden, sir?"

Quentillian intended to suggest the inclusion of Captain Cuscaden in the proposed conference, which might reasonably be supposed to concern him closely, but the Canon misunderstood the elliptical reference.

"Aye, Owen, I have no bitterness left in my heart, even for him. "Unto seventy times seven." Those words have been ringing in my ears until I could almost bring myself to believe that I heard them uttered aloud. I need not ask if all is well with you, dear boy? Your self-command and generosity have shamed me all along."

The absolute sincerity of the utterance caused Quentillian, with considerably more reason than the Canon, to feel ashamed in his turn.

"I am very far from being what you think me, sir," he said, earnestly, and with complete truth. "I am afraid you are very tired."

The Canon, indeed, looked utterly exhausted.

"If so, it is in my Master's service," said Canon

Morchard gently. "And you remember, Owen—'there remaineth a rest.' May it be mine, and yours, too—all in His own good time! Goodnight to you, my dear."

For the first time since Owen's childish days, the Canon placed his hand upon his head and murmured a word of blessing.

Then, with a smile as wistful as it was tender, he turned and went away upstairs.

(viii)

The following day was one of singular discomfort, and of private interviews that were held to be of the greatest necessity, in spite of the fact that the participants always emerged from them in worse plight than they went in.

The Canon saw Valeria in his study, and she came out crying.

Valeria sought Flora, and both wept.

Quentillian deliberately demanded an interview from Captain Cuscaden, but was baffled in his design of a rational discussion of the three-cornered situation by Cuscaden's honest bewilderment at the mere suggestion of disinterested counsel.

It seemed, indeed, that Captain Cuscaden would have understood Owen better, and certainly have thought more highly of him, had the traditional horse whip, abhorred of all Owen's most deeply-rooted prejudices, held a place in their conversation, at least as threat, if not as actual fact.

Failing the horsewhip, Cuscaden was inclined to follow in the wake of the Canon and attribute to Valeria's discarded fiance a spirit of generous heroism that was even less to Quentillian's liking.

"Captain Cuscaden takes primitive views," Quentillian observed to Lucilla, whom alone he suspected of summing up the whole situation very much at its true value.

"Yes, that will suit Val very well."

"You think she takes primitive views, too?"

"Yes, don't you?"

Owen realized that, although he had never thought Valeria subtle, he had at least supposed her to be capable of appreciating his own subtlety. But subtleties had not, apparently, really weighed with Val at all.

The sight of her tear-mottled face annoyed Owen's aesthetic sense so much, and he felt so sincerely ashamed of his annoyance, that it constrained him to absent himself from the house all the afternoon. He

would gladly have left St. Gwenllian altogether and felt sure that the Canon expected nothing less of him, but Flora brought him a piteous little message from Val to beg that he would remain until "something was settled."

In the forlorn hope that this had been achieved, Quentillian returned.

An eager grasp met him almost upon the threshold.

"Owen, dear lad! Where have you been? I have been uneasy—most uneasy, at your prolonged absence."

"I'm very sorry, sir."

"Nay, so long as all is well with you! I should have had more faith."

The Canon smiled gravely, and relief was latent in the smile. Quentillian suddenly realized that Canon Morchard had not improbably known the sub-conscious fear of his guest and protege having sought some drastic means of ending an existence in the course of which he had been played so ill a turn.

His sense of his own inadequacy increased every moment.

"May I know how things stand?" he enquired abruptly.

"May you? Who has a better right than yourself, dear Owen? Come you out with me, and let us have a few words together."

Owen followed his host.

"It has been a trying day—a sad and trying one.

But I need not tell you that—you, whose grief is so much greater than mine own, even. Though you, at least, Oweft, have nothing to reproach yourself with, whereas I am responsible for the weakness in my poor child which has led to this unhappy state of affairs. But at least she is fully sensible of error—she knows what she has done."

It would be strange indeed if she did not, Owen reflected, in the universal bouleversement that had characterized Valeria's surroundings ever since her sudden departure from the conventions.

"To my surprise, Lucilla, upon whose judgment I place a certain reliance, although it may sound somewhat odd to hear of a father seeking counsel of his child—Lucilla advocates my sanctioning her sister's marriage. My first instinct was of course to cut her short at the mention of anything so premature—so—so lacking in all taste or feeling. But—I hardly

know "

"There is nothing against Captain Cuscaden, is there?"

Quentillian made the observation in the simple hope of expediting the Canon's decision, but he immediately perceived that it led him open once more to the imputation of high-minded generosity.

"I mean to say, he can afford to marry?" he amended hastily.

"He has satisfied me upon that score," Canon Morchard admitted. "I have never desired wealth for my dear ones, nor have they been brought up to it. Valeria is not unfitted to become the wife of a poor man. Nay, had she but acted an honourable and high-minded part throughout, I should gladly send her forth into the New World. Valeria has something of the pioneer spirit, I have always felt."

He sighed heavily.

"In short, Owen, if, as Lucilla tells me, you share her own view, then I shall not withhold my consent to this marriage. The haste is strange and unseemly, but Captain Cuscaden cannot postpone his departure, in view of the position awaiting him, and my unhappy child, left here, would be in a difficult and awkward situation, nor have I any security, alas, that she has sufficient discretion to face such a situation."

"It might be difficult for her," Quentillian admitted.

"Lucilla is looking for us, I think, sir."

Lucilla was indeed advancing towards them.

The Canon frowned slightly.

"Am I wanted, my child?"

"It was Owen that I wanted, father."

"My dear, Owen is engaged with me."

"I know," Lucilla seemed slightly perplexed, but quite unruffled. "I know, but the post is just going, and I thought Owen ought to see this before I send it to the papers."

She handed him a sheet of notepaper, upon which he read a brief and conventionally-worded announcement to the effect that the marriage arranged between him self and Valeria Morchard would not take place.

He passed it to the Canon, who groaned.

"Must this be?" he enquired, with some superfluity.

The superfluity seemed to strike himself, for he added almost at once :

" 'If 't'were done, 't'were well 'twere done quickly', no doubt."

"There is the other announcement to be thought of," said Lucilla with merciless common sense. "If Val is married at the end of this week, we shall have to put that in the papers."

The Canon gave Owen a quick, anxious glance.

"Come into the house, my daughter," he said to Lucilla. "We can speak of such matters there."

Owen understood that Canon Morchard was thinking of him.

On a sudden impulse he went to seek Valeria.

"Look here, my dear, I'd do anything to help you, but do you really want me to stay on here any longer? It's more than I can stand."

"Oh, Owen! I thought you'd forgiven me—I thought you didn't mind, so very much, after all," she cried in dismay.

"I don't mind in the least," Quentillian told her desperately. "But it's a false position altogether, and I want to be out of it."

"Of course you do, it was very selfish of me to want to keep you. Only somehow Father is less—dreadful—when you're there, Owen. But he's forgiven me," her tears came falling fast, "and I'm going out with George when he sails, at the beginning of next week. We shall be married very, very quietly, on Saturday."

"I'm very glad to hear it. Indeed I am, Val. I'm sure he's a good fellow, and I hope he'll make you very happy."

She was crying too much to speak, as he went away from her.

And Quentillian, definitely, could tell himself that he had no regrets in relinquishing Valeria.

Her warm emotionalism had not been without its appeal, but he had no liking for tears at a crisis, nor indeed for a crisis at all. His mind reverted to Lucilla's matter-of-fact fashion of dealing with the crucial instances of life at St. Gwenllian, and theoretically, he met her attitude with applause. But he also remembered that he had not found her sympathetic, upon the preceding evening.

Impartially, he acknowledged with a rueful smile, his own exactingness.

He must go, and decided that it should be to London. As for Stear, he would face it later. The thought of Stear, and the loneliness there, brought the realest sense of loss to him that he had yet experienced over the defection of Valeria.

He had thought to hear her laughter there, to see

the apricot-bloom on her lovely face, her children growing up there.

With a long sigh, Owen let the vision go. The warm, human things of life had come very near to him, but he had not known how to hold them. Some subtle, inner sense warned him that Valeria had done well to betake herself and the rich gifts of her ardent nature, to the simple and primitive life of the colonies, and the man who was offering that life to her. He went away to make his preparations for leaving St. Gwenllian.

Valeria's wedding, not unnaturally, provided no occasion for festivity.

The bride herself remarked in private to her sisters :

"I feel exactly as though I was one of those unfortunate girls who come to Father for him to marry them so as to 'make honest women of them' at the eleventh hour. You know the way that sort of wedding is hurried through, in a hole-and-corner style . . ."

"It's lucky for you you've got a good deal of your trousseau made already," was Lucilla's practical reply.

"Yes, and 'V. Q.' embroidered on more than half of it!" cried Val hysterically.

"You can't possibly use it," Flora declared austere.

"Unless I can. alter it for you in time.,."

"Of course she can use it," said Lucilla.

Valeria left them both. In the overstrained condition of her nerves, Lucilla's crudely-worded commonsense and Flora's fastidiousness were equally little to her taste. Her father's sorrowful gravity struck her with despair, and Owen Quantillian's magnanimous detachment puzzled her sincerely, and made her doubly remorseful.

It was only when George Cuscaden was actually with her that she knew with real certainty that she had done right at the last moment.

On the night before her wedding, Canon Morchard called Valeria, gave her his blessing and forgiveness, and handed to her some of her dead mother's jewelry.

"God bless and help you in the way that you have chosen, and may He bring all things together for good, as He alone can do."

"Forgive me, Father."

"My child, I have nothing to forgive. It was not I whom you wronged, but yourself,—and one other. His pardon is yours, fully and freely, as you know well. And now, my Valeria, you owe it to your husband to put the past behind you. You will enter into

your new life purified by that very sense of past error, humbled by repentance."

The Canon's voice was very gentle.

It was long after midnight when Valeria heard him go upstairs.

George Cuscaden and Valeria were married by Mr. Clover, immediately after Matins next day, and Canon Morchard, throughout the ceremony, knelt with his face hidden by his hand.

The sense of irrevocability that comes to most brides assailed Valeria irresistibly for a moment as she walked, alone with her husband, the short distance from the church back to St. Gwenllian.

She glanced up at him, and in the look that met hers she found all the reassurance that she was ever to need.

"A new life, and a new world, my Val. We're going to face things together, now."

She was no longer afraid or doubtful, but felt the strangest rush of pure exhilaration.

It was her justification for the past.

"A new life, and a new world," she repeated.

"We're going to be very happy, in spite of everything that's happened."

"We are very happy," said George Cuscaden firmly, her hand held fast in his.

"I think they'll forgive me, at home, in time. Father was very kind last night, and Flossie and Lucilla have been so good."

"Val, my darling," said the young man very seriously, "there's one thing I do want to say, and you mustn't mind. You've got to leave the past behind you, now. Isn't there something or other in the Bible about for getting thy father's house and thine own people?"

"Something like that."

"Well, I don't really mean forgetting them, you know. But you've got your own life now, and it isn't going to run on the old lines any more. It seems to me there's been such a lot of talking and thinking in your life up to now, that there's been no room for doing anything. You and I are going to change all that."

"Yes, George," said Valeria.

She had, mysteriously, become absolutely happy and absolutely secure. Nothing mattered any more at all except the fact that George and she had found one another in time.

And she was able to surmise, not without a smile,

that she had that moment heard almost the only Scriptural quotation from her husband of which he was ever likely to deliver himself.

Quotations, collections, barren discussions, abstract ideals, all lay behind her. In future her preoccupations would concern the health and welfare of her husband and perhaps his children, food and clothing and warmth, pots and pans, and the work of her own hands.

And from the depths of her heart, Valeria was glad.



IMAGES AND SYMBOLS

By Marguerite Wilkinson

From **New Voices: An Introduction To Contemporary Poetry**
(1921, The Macmillan Company)

Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image.

Ex. XX. 4.

*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the
evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I
have no pleasure in them.*

*While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars be not darkened,
nor the clouds return after the rain:*

*In the days when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the
strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they
are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened.*

*And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the
grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of a bird, and all the
daughters of musick shall be brought low;*

*Also, when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall
be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper
shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long
home, and the mourners go about the streets:*

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or

*the pitcher broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.
Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit
shall return unto God who gave it.*

Ecc. xii. 1-7.

As we all know, the ancient Hebrews were forbidden by their religion to make graven images of persons or animals. This may have been the first Puritanical prohibition against the arts of painting and sculpture. But unlike many of our Puritanical prohibitions against the arts, it may have served a good purpose. The Hebrews were a small people, numerically, living in a small country, surrounded by other peoples whose worship was sensual and crude. Perhaps they worshipped Jahveh more spiritually and cleanly because they were not permitted to make an image of Him, or of the creatures made in His image. Perhaps that is one reason why the Hebrews gave the world a monotheistic religion, a religion spiritually perceived. We must remember that the ancient world had no science comparable to ours, and strong enough to strike a lance of light through the dark fabric of ignorance and superstition, and to shatter the gross, material gods behind it. And for this reason, and for other reasons, the development of monotheistic religion might have come much later in history if the ancient Hebrews had been allowed to make graven images and worship them after the manner of other nations of their time.

Now in all strong races the desire to give form and substance to ideas and emotions is strong and keenly felt. The Hebrews were no exception to this rule, and the images which they were not allowed to make with their fingers they made with their minds and gave to the world in a literature strong and clear and beautiful. The reader can not find, I suppose, in all of the literature written or rewritten in our language, a more excellent description of old age than that quoted from Ecclesiastes. It is a superb description because it is a universal truth stated in symbols that are absolutely true and appropriate. The majesty of these metaphors has given this passage everlasting life.

Let us take a single verse of this chapter and translate it into plain prose statement. Instead of saying "In the days when the keepers of the house shall tremble," let us say, "In the days when a man's arms have grown weak"; instead of "and the strong men shall bow themselves," let us say, "when the legs are bent"; instead of "and the grinders shall cease because they are few," "when a man is losing his teeth and his ability to masticate"; and instead of "and those that look out of the windows be darkened," "when a man grows blind." Having done this we find that we have stated a scientific fact. But we have stated it quite unfeelingly. And therefore, when we say it in this fashion, we awaken no sense of wistfulness, fear, tenderness,

regret or compassion in the reader. Whereas the great original, by its transcendent beauty and truth imaginatively expressed, reaches our minds and hearts and abides with us. It induces sympathy.

Images and symbols, then, are valuable in literature because they present truth far more concisely, vividly, memorably and emotionally than literal statement.

The more we think about it the more certain we become that the use of images and symbols in poetry has an importance that is far more than literary or decorative. It is structural. It takes issue from a poet's realization of life. The sense impressions which go into the making of a poet's images and symbols are the result of what his nimble five wits have taught him. True images and symbols are not worked out intellectually and tacked upon the surface of a poem superficially, as a ribbon bow is tacked to a piece of lingerie in a department store. Like good rhythms, good images and symbols are the direct and truthful record of a poet's emotions and ideas and are capable of giving the reader a share in these ideas.

Whenever images and symbols have been devised by the "surface intellect" for the superficial adornment of a work of art and for the love of mere cleverness, analysis is likely to reveal weakness and aesthetic insincerity. Sometimes poems by very clever moderns fall short of their best effect simply because the symbols used in them could never have been realized and profoundly felt and are, therefore, rather more clever than true. Says Wallace Stevens, in "Tattoo"

"The light is like a spider.
It crawls over the water.
It crawls over the edges of the snow.
It crawls under your eyelids
And spreads its webs there
—
Its two webs."

Read casually that sounds well enough. But it will not bear analysis. A spider is a small, dark, rayed object moving in darts and jerks. Is light a spider in form, color, texture, movement, power? Do spiders crawl over water, over the edges of snow, under our eyelids? It sounds improbable. To read these lines thoughtfully is to be convinced that light is not at all like a spider. It is difficult to conceive of any interpretation of the poem that would reveal truth in this symbol.

Let us compare it with another little poem, by Carl Sandburg. The poem is called "Fog" and the new symbol used to make us feel a sense of the fog is what makes all the sum and substance of it.

"The fog comes
on little cat feet.
It sits looking
over harbor and city
on silent haunches
and then moves on."

Evidently Mr. Sandburg wishes to give us a sense of the quietness that is always in a fog. Nothing else but a cat moves so silently as a fog. The symbolism is daring, but it is quite true and has been truthfully felt. If we know what a fog is like, we can feel it for ourselves. It is whimsical, to be sure, and these lines, have nothing more to recommend them than the honesty and suggestive power of this symbol or image. But having that, they justify themselves.

All images and symbols used in poetry can be tested by the reader. For a lover of poetry with a sympathetic imagination will be able to discriminate between sincere craftsmanship and that which is spurious. He will learn for himself why a nightingale is not a real bird in the poem of a man who has never heard one sing, but feels called upon to maunder about a nightingale's song. He will learn why an English primrose, beloved of Wordsworth, becomes a false flower in a poem by an American mimic who has never seen one, who would be wiser to write about goldenrod. He will understand why it is a heinous aesthetic sin to bring heather into a poem as a rhyme for weather, when the word is not only irrelevant, but only half understood through the literature of others. And if he will contrast enough IMAGES AND SYMBOLS 87

good poems with enough bad ones, the reader will come to feel that poets capable of such artistic immoralties are only clowns wearing laurel wreaths that they have snatched from brows more reverend than their own.

The poet's purpose is not utilitarian, to be sure. He is no lawyer making a contract. But he must be as loyal to his own code as the lawyer to the law. It is his power and privilege to surround facts with beauty, or with such impressive qualities as are relevant to those facts. But he must serve as a priest celebrates a sacrament. His images and symbols must be the true outward and visible signs of the grace given him.

Now the poets in the period immediately preceding our own used images and symbols—poets always have used them, for it is well nigh impossible to make a readable poem without them—but they were not content simply to show the picture and suggest the meaning. At least, many of them were not content with this. They wanted to explain their own symbols. They wanted to moralize with them. They poured a good deal of water into

the nectar they offered us, and sometimes it tasted like a thin and feeble gruel.

In our time, however, the best poets have given emphatic evidence of the belief that it is almost enough, if not quite enough, to present images and symbols adequately and let them work their own spell. This accounts, in part, for the brevity of much of our contemporary poetry and for the conciseness of it. It accounts, in part, for the beauty of it. But it makes it necessary for images and symbols to be, in and of themselves, true and valuable in relation to the mood of the poem, since the poet will not explain them or direct our attention to their meaning. Let us read and discuss first a few poems in which mental images are used simply for the sake of the picture they present and for the sense impressions which can be shared with the reader. And then let us read and discuss other poems in which images are used for their value as symbols.

The poets who have called themselves Imagists are more emphatic than any others in affirming their belief in the use of images. They are as emphatic as it is possible to be and keep sanity. Briefly stated, this is their ideal of what a poem should be:—an image, or series of related images, presented in organic rhythm and suggesting a mood. For the simple and direct lyric cry, for the philosophical suggestions that show the soul of the folk, for the plain earth-wisdom of simple men and women, for that proud and prescient sense of the meaning of life which has been the glory of English poetry in the work of many masters, the Imagists seem to care very little. And their best work is often done when they forget to be Imagists and become poets. But there is a measure of truth in their credo. And it has value as an antithetical remedy for the ills of Victorian diffuseness, vagueness and sentimentality. Almost any of the poems of H. D. are admirable illustrations of Imagism. The poem quoted at the end of this chapter, "Sea Gods," depends for its effect upon our ability to see and smell and feel and share intellectually what is told in it.

"But we bring violets.
Great masses, single, sweet,
Wood-violets, stream-violets,
Violets from a wet marsh."

This lyric, and many of the other lyrics by H. D., Richard Aldington, and the other Imagists, have undeniable beauty, for which we should be thankful. But we do not want all poetry to be of this kind. We need a more robust spiritual food. We can not live on pictures of flowers. Imagists should use more

verbs if they would stir us deeply. On the other hand, although it is clear that, if the tenets of Imagism became dogmas for any great number of poets, we should need a reaction against them as much as ever we needed reaction against the minor Victorians, we should not allow ourselves to belittle their very real achievements. Imagists are seldom guilty of trite phrases and dull similes. They have brought new color into poetry and new impressions of the beauty of the external world.

Many critics have come to believe that Amy Lowell is the greatest of the Imagists, indeed more than an Imagist. Certainly she can do marvellous things with images and symbols. Like Ahohab, son of Ahisamech, she is "an engraver, and a cunning workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in scarlet, and fine hnen." Other poets must lay the floor plans and rear the props that uphold our tabernacle of poetry; others must fashion an ark to keep sacred forever the covenant that we make with beauty and virtue. Others, to speak more briefly, must be our realists and idealists. Miss Lowell is primarily a cunning workman, an artificer in brilliant colors, an engraver of fine designs.

No one can rightly evaluate Miss Lowell's work who will not accept the fact that she is always a conscious artist. She goes far afield, sometimes, for the materials of her poems. But she selects them with care. She uses the lives of people who live on New England farms to-day, or the lives of quaint swashbucklers who lived a century ago and half a world away. She shows pictures of strange and vivid things that she has seen in a wide and vivid world. She makes these pictures out of the juxtaposition of odd trifles with scents and hues and textures that she likes. And in her best work she gives us frosty designs in thought as clear as glass, flashing patterns of feeling as warmly colored as glossy skeins of embroidery silk—blue and purple and scarlet, silver and gold. She distills sensations that sting like fiery liqueur. She threads together impressions as frail as a flutter of old lace. She is a poet of vigorous, penetrative and incessantly communicative imagination.

In her "Mahnaison" and "1777," as in all of the poems in her recent book, "Can Grande's Castle," Miss Lowell has given us clearly and copiously imagined pictures from history. Here is an admirable picture of an English inn taken from her poem, "Hedge Island." It is simply a series of related images, but we see the picture. We have been in that inn!

"A long oak corridor. Then a burst of sunshine through leaded windows, spangling a floor, iris-tinting rounds of beef, and flaked veal pies, and rose-marbled hams, and great succu-

lent cheeses. Wine-glasses take it and break it, and it quivers away over the table-cloth in faint rainbows; or, straight and sudden, stamps a startling silver whorl on the polished side of a teapot of hot bohea. A tortoise-shell cat naps between red geraniums, and myrtle sprigs tap the stuccoed wall, gently blowing to and fro."

This is the Imagist method, just the same method used in the poem by H. D. from which we quoted. But this poem is a narrative and that was a lyric.

To be sure, Miss Lowell's rampant imagination sometimes runs away with itself for sheer joy in the clatter it can make in passing. When this happens she gives us lurid little bits of clever mental agony like "Red Suppers." Or perhaps she finds forms and qualities in Nature for which Nature herself would seek in vain. In a recent poem about the war and the sugarbeet industry she made delightful red and yellow and globular pictures of a vegetable that looks like a long, grayish turnip. But since her imagination yields the real moonshine of poetry we should be willing to forgive the occasional babble. For a magical imagination Miss Lowell assuredly has.

The imagination that can make magical use of sense impressions belongs, also, to D. H. Lawrence, F. S. Flint and the others already mentioned, who began their careers as Imagists, but are growing individually with the passing of time.

It sometimes happens that poets who are not Imagists write poems that have a beauty of the kind Imagists often seek in vain, because they seek too intellectually and self-consciously. Such a poem is "Silver," by Walter de la Mare. It is a color study, delighting us as a fine painting would. It has the additional charm of a cool, liquid rhythm. Few poems of our day have so great a beauty of imagery. For every image is true. Anyone can see the same thing at the right place and time.

" Couched in his kennel, like a log,
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;
From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep."

This is all said in magical words. Millions of men and women and children have seen this silver symphony on moonlit nights. Now it is poetry.

In his "Old Woman of The Roads" Padraic Colum uses images in a lyrical fashion of his own to express the homely emotions of a poor and homeless old woman. They are all true images of things that belong in simple cottages and hold the love of simple women everywhere. The "white and blue and

speckled store" of "shining delph," the "hearth and stool and all," the "clock with weights and chains," the "pile of turf," are all pictures of the desire in the old woman's heart. They come very near to being symbols.

Francis Carlin's quatrain, "The Cuckoo," is good imagery, deftly made of sound and color.

"A Sound but from an Echo made
And a body wrought of colored Shade,
Have blent themselves into a bird
But seldom seen and scarcely heard."

Very beautiful poetry can be made by the use of images. But a more subtle skill is required of the poet who would make us perceive, through his imagery, something greater and more important than the images presented. And the beauty of symbolism leads the human spirit farther than the beauty of imagery. Many of the best contemporary poets have written poems remarkable for beautiful symbolism, poems that are, in reality, large, compound, and subtly amplified metaphors. One of the most notable of these is Rupert Brooke's "The Great Lover." It is descriptive of the hearty love of life, nothing more difficult and complex than that. And Rupert Brooke, who was a very keen and sentient poet, has used admirably chosen images of familiar things to symbolize his theme. When he enumerated the many things that made life blessed for him, he was speaking truly, doubtless, of each one of them. But he was doing more than that. In the strongest way in the world, and in a very beautiful way, he was saying over and over again that he loved life and found it good. This poem may well be considered the lovehest thing he ever wrote, although patriotism has made his sonnets more popular. Here is a short passage which gives but a taste of the flavor of the whole:

"These have I loved:
White plates and cups, clean-gleaming.
Ringed with blue lines; and feathery, faery dust;
Wet roofs, beneath the lamp-light; the strong crust
Of friendly bread; and many-tasting food;
Rainbows; and the blue, bitter smoke of wood;"

William H. Davies is another English poet who has written poems remarkable for their beautiful symbolism. In one famous little lyric he makes the thunderstorm the symbol of his own moods. In another poem, which is a brilliant narrative about two women whose lives were none too good, he uses the bird of paradise—an amazingly accurate, vivid and ironical symbol — to stand for something sacred which poor Nell Barnes had loved

and cherished.

"Not for the world! Take care!
Don't touch that bird of paradise,
Perched on the bed post there!"

A lesser artist might have explained in detail just what the bird of paradise meant to poor Nell. He might have moralized about the state of her conscience. He might have been sentimental. He might have wetted the feathers of his own symbol with his own tears and washed out their lovely color. But with fine, clean, sharp art Mr. Davies does none of these things. He lets the symbol stand out clearly and arouses in us a more profound pity than could ever have been aroused by many stanzas of explanation.

Still another fine use of symbols is to be found in "Frost Tonight" by Edith M. Thomas. The symbols themselves are old, frost meaning death, flowers meaning the harvest of life, but they are used with a grave and sincere simplicity which makes them the poet's own. For this is quite enough to prevent the possibility of a trite effect, and to insure a sense of beautiful authenticity.

Similarly Adelaide Crapsey uses an old symbol, the wind, meaning fear and sorrow, but uses it masterfully in one of her little "Cinquains," "Night Winds."

"The old,
Old winds that blew
When chaos was, what do
They tell the clattered trees that I
Should weep? "

The truth seems to be that through all the ages' the same symbols have been used again and again. Wherever men and women have been led by life to think and feel certain things in a certain way, they have used certain symbols as the inevitable way of expressing themselves. In hot countries everlasting heat is the symbol of damnation; in cold countries, everlasting cold. Again and again the seasons, spring, summer, autumn and winter are made to mean birth, growth, maturity, death. A winding river is life. The seed of the man is the child. The banner is the nation. The summit is success. The uphill climb is effort. The tree is the race, the family, the strong man. The use of the tree as a symbol of the strong man is particularly noticeable in poems about our American strong man, Abraham Lincoln. Many poems liken Lincoln to a tree. John Gould Fletcher calls him a "gaunt scraggly pine." The phrase is meaningful. Edwin Markham, writing with a similar idea

in mind, says:

"And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a kingly cedar green with boughs
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky."

This is probably the best of all poems about Lincoln. And it is a very fine study for those interested in symbolism. For in it the qualities of natural objects, rocks, rain, and other works of external nature, are used as symbols of spiritual qualities in the great man.

If such symbols are old, as old as the ages, how is it that they retain their strength and freshness? The answer to that question is one word—Realization. They will seem trite and ineffectual, these symbols, or any symbols, if they are used artificially and insincerely or as the result of feeble, puerile, ineffectual realization. But when a poet feels the force of any symbol in relation to his own mood and emotion, the symbol will take, through the medium of his personality, a new individuality and authenticity. To be insincere in the world of action is to be less than ethical. To be insincere in the world of poetry is to be less than artistic.

Just before the war a book was published purporting to be a book of poems by founders of a new school of poetry. It was called "Spectra" and signed by collaborators, Emanuel Morgan and Anne Knish. In it were cleverly preposterous verses, a sort of symbolic gibberish, which deceived many clever persons, — clever persons, mind— into taking the book seriously. Well known poets and well known critics wrote about that book and even wrote to the authors of it, telling them that the poor, stupid old World would understand them some day. But insincerity of conception and execution was so patent in every line that one wonders how anyone could have been deceived. Certainly the stupid old World was not deceived, although it howled with laughter at lines like the following:

"Two cocktails around a smile,
A grape-fruit after grace,
» Flowers in an aisle
. . . Were your face!"

The stupid old World was right. Laughter was what the authors longed for and expected. "Spectra" was simply an elaborate spoof, a book made in ridicule of the insincerities of many of the "saffron schools." The attempt to show by exaggeration how

absurd such literary insincerities can become was worth while. It is a noteworthy fact that the wise—in current opinion—were deceived. The simple and sincere were not. "Spectra" was written by two very good poets, Arthur Davison Ficke and Witter Bynner.

We have often been told that the masters of symbolism come from the Orient. This may be because the making of strong symbols is a task for leisure and meditation, and the Orient loves leisure and meditation as the Occident loves action and thought.

But whatever the reason may be, it is fairly probable that no poet of our time is a greater master of symbolism than Sir Rabindranath Tagore. As has been said in a previous chapter, symbolism is the very structure and symmetry of design in his poems written in English. We can pick up his books and open them almost at random, to find strong, sure symbolism on any page.

"The current in which I drifted ran rapid and strong when I was young. The spring breeze was spendthrift of itself, the trees were on fire with flowers; and the birds never slept from singing."

Pages could give no better idea of youth. There he goes on to say,

"Now that youth has ebbed and I am stranded on the bank, I can hear the deep music of all things, and the sky opens to me its heart of stars."

Pages could give no better idea of age with its spiritual compensations.

The poetry of Kahlil Gibran, too, is almost entirely a poetry of symbolism. His poems are parables, not designs in rhyme, rhythm or imagery, although his rhythms are clear and pleasing.

In his book, "The Madman," we have the best parables that can be found in contemporary poetry. And each may be interpreted according to the whimsy of the reader. "The Fox" is a sage little parable. It may mean ambition—illusion—the usual trend of human life—fate—or what you will.

"A fox looked at his shadow at sunrise and said, 'I will have a camel for lunch to-day.' And all morning he went about looking for camels. But at noon he saw his shadow again—and he said, 'A mouse will do.'"

But great poets of the Occident are also masters of symbolism. One of the most beautiful modern poems made out of a symbol is "Cargo" by John Masefield. Only one symbol is used—the cargo. But in terms of that symbol, and in three short stanzas, Mr. Masefield describes commerce in three great periods of the world's history. And he contrives to give us a sense of the world's growth in democracy without saying a word about it.

The greatest piece of imagery and symbolism in contemporary poetry, however, may well be "The Bull " by Ralph Hodgson. This animal epic is warm, brilliant, magnificent. Each image in the rich sequence of stanzas has its own glistening pomp. All, taken together, are symbols that suggest the creative power of life and the wistfulness of its waning into darkness.

CARGOES

Quinquireme of Nineveh from distant Ophir,
Rowing home to haven in sunny Palestine,
With a cargo of ivory
And apes and peacocks.
Sandalwood, cedarwood, and sweet, white wine.
Stately Spanish galleon coming from the Isthmus,
Dipping through the Tropics by the palm-green shores
With a cargo of diamonds,
Emeralds, amethysts,
Topazes, and cinnamon, and gold moidores.
Dirty British coaster with a salt-caked smoke stack.
Butting through the channel in the mad March days
With a cargo of Tyne coal.
Road rails, pig lead,
Firewood, ironware, and cheap tin trays.
John Masefield

THE BULL

See an old unhappy bull,
Sick in soul and body both,
Slouching in the undergrowth
Of the forest beautiful,
Banished from the herd he led,
Bulls and cows a thousand head.
Cranes and gaudy parrots go
Up and down the burning sky;
Tree-top cats purr drowsily
In the dim-day green below;
And troops of monkeys, nutting, some,
All disputing, go and come;
And things abominable sit
Picking offal buck or swine,
On the mess and over it
Burnished flies and beetles shine,
And spiders big as bladders lie
Under hemlocks ten foot high;
And a dotted serpent curled
Round and round and round a tree.

Yellowing its greenery.
Keeps a watch on all the world,
AH the world and this old bull
In the forest beautiful.
Bravely by his fall he came:
One he led, a bull of blood
Newly come to lustihood.
Fought and put his prince to shame.
Snuffed and pawed the prostrate head
Tameless even while it bled.
There they left him, every one,
Left him there without a lick,
Left him for the birds to pick,
Left him there for carrion,
Vilely from their bosom cast
Wisdom, worth and love at last.
AATien the lion left his lair
And roared his beauty through the hills.
And the vultures pecked their qiulls
And flew into the middle air,
Then this prince no more to reign
Came to life and lived again.
He snuffed the herd in far retreat.
He saw the blood upon the ground.
And snuffed the burning airs around
Still with beevish odours sweet.
While the blood ran down his head
And his mouth ran slaver red.
Pity him, this fallen chief,
AU his splendour, aU his strength,
AU his body's breadth and length
Dwindled down with shame and grief.
Half the bull he was before.
Bones and leather, nothing more.
See him standing dewlap-deep
In the rushes at the lake.
Surly, stupid, half asleep.
Waiting for his heart to break
And the birds to join the flies
Feasting at his bloodshot eyes,

—

Standing with his head hung down
In a stupor, dreaming things:
Green savannas, jungles brown.
Battlefields and beUowings,
BuUs undone and lions dead
And vultures flapping overhead.

Dreaming things: of days he spent
With his mother gaunt and lean
In the valley warm and green,
FuU of baby wonderment,
Blinking out of silly eyes
At a hundred mysteries;
Dreaming over once again
How he wandered with a throng
Of bulls and cows a thousand strong,
Wandered on from plain to plain,
Up the hoi and down the dale,
Always at his mother's tail;
How he lagged behind the herd,
Lagged and tottered, weak of Umb,
And she turned and ran to him
Blaring at the loathly bird
Stationed always in the skies.
Waiting for the flesh that dies.
Dreaming maybe of a day
When her drained and drying paps
Turned him to the sweets and saps,
Richer fountains by the way,
And she left the bull she bore
And he looked to her no more;
And his little frame grew stout,
And his Httle legs grew strong.
And the way was not so long;
And his httle horns came out.
And he played at butting trees
And boulder-stones and tortoises,
Joined a game of knobby skulls
With the youngsters of his year.
All the other little bulls,
Learning both to bruise and bear.
Learning how to stand a shock
Like a httle bull of rock.
Dreaming of a day less dim,
Dreaming of a time less far,
When the faint but certain star
Of destiny burned clear for him.
And a fierce and wild imrest
Broke the quiet of his breast,
And the gristles of his youth
Hardened in his comely pow.
And he came to fighting growth.
Beat his buU and won his cow.
And flew his tail and trampled off
Past the tallest, vain enough.

And curved about in splendour full
And curved again and snuffed the airs
As who should say Come out who dares!
And all beheld a bull, a BuU,
And knew that here was surely one
That backed for no bull, fearing none.
And the leader of the herd
Looked and saw, and beat the ground.
And shook the forest with his sound,
Bellowed at the loathly bird
Stationed always in the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.
Dreaming, this old bull forlorn,
Surely dreaming of the hour
When he came to sultan power.
And they owned him master-horn,
Chieftest bull of all among
Bulls and cows a thousand strong.
And in all the tramping herd
Not a bull that barred his way.
Not a cow that said him nay,
Not a bull or cow that erred
In the furnace of his look
Dared a second, worse rebuke;
Not in all the forest wide,
Jungle, thicket, pasture, fen.
Not another dared him then.
Dared him and again defied;
Not a sovereign buck or boar
Came a second time for more.
Not a serpent that survived
Once the terrors of his hoof
Risked a second time reproof,
Came a second time and lived,
Not a serpent in its skin
Came again for discipline;
Not a leopard bright as flame,
Flashing fingerhooks of steel,
That a wooden tree might feel,
Met his fury once and came
For a second reprimand.
Not a leopard in the land.
Not a lion of them all,
Not a lion of the hills,
Hero of a thousand kills.
Dared a second fight and fall,
Dared that ram terrific twice,
Paid a second time the price. . . ,

Pity him, this dupe of dream.
Leader of the herd again
Only in his daft old brain.
Once again the bull supreme
And bull enough to bear the part
Only in his tameless heart.

Pity him that he must wake;
Even now the swarm of flies
Blackening his bloodshot eyes
Bursts and blusters round the lake,
Scattered from the feast half-fed,
By great shadows overhead.
And the dreamer turns away
From his visionary herds
And his splendid yesterday.
Turns to meet the loathly birds
Flocking round him from the skies,
Waiting for the flesh that dies.
Ralph Hodgson

SEA GODS

I

They say there is no hope

—

Sand—drift—rocks—rubble of the sea

—

The broken hulk of a ship.

Hung with shreds of rope.

Pallid under the cracked pitch.

They say there is no hope

To conjure you

—

No whip of the tongue to anger you

—

No hate of words

You must rise to refute.

They say you are twisted by the sea,

You are cut apart

By wave-break upon wave-break,

That you are misshapen by the sharp rocks,

Broken by the rasp and after-rasp.

That you are cut, torn, mangled,

Torn by the stress and beat,

No stronger than the strips of sand

Along your ragged beach.

II

But we bring violets,
Great masses—single, sweet.
Wood-violets, stream-violets,
Violets from a wet marsh.
Violets in clumps from hiUs,
Tufts with earth at the roots,
Violets tugged from rocks.
Blue violets, moss, cliff, river-violets.
YeUow violets' gold.
Burnt with a rare tint

—

Violets like red ash
Among tufts of grass.
We bring deep-purple
Bird-foot violets.
We bring the hyacinth-violet,
Sweet, bare, chiU to the touch

—

And violets whiter than the in-rush
Of your own white surf.

III

For you will come,
You will yet haunt men in ships.
You will trail across the fringe of strait
And circle the jagged rocks.
You will trail across the rocks
And wash them with your salt,
You win curl between sand-hills

—

You will thunder along the cliff

—

Break—retreat—^get fresh strength—
Gather and pour weight upon the beach.
You will draw back.
And the ripple on the sand-shelf
Will be witness of your track.
The lintel of wet sand with froth.
You will bring myrrh-bark
And drift laurel-wood from hot coasts.
When you hurl high—high

—

We will answer with a shout.
For you will come,
You will come.
You will answer our taut hearts,
You wUl break the lie of men's thoughts,

And cherish and shelter us.
H. D.

ARIZONA
THE WINDMILLS

The windmills, like great sunflowers of steel.
Lift themselves proudly over the straggling houses;
And at their feet the deep blue-green alfalfa
Cuts the desert like the stroke of a sword.
Yellow melon flowers
Crawl beneath the withered peach-trees;
A date-palm throws its heavy fronds of steel
Against the scoured metallic sky.
The houses, double-roofed for coolness.
Cower amid the manzanita scrub.
A man with jingling spurs
Walks heavily out of a vine-bowered doorway.
Mounts his pony, rides away.
The windmills stare at the sun.
The yellow earth cracks and blisters.
Everything is still.
In the afternoon
The wind takes dry waves of heat and tosses them,
Mingled with dust, up and down the streets.
Against the belfry with its green bells:
And, after sunset, when the sky
Becomes a green and orange fan.
The windmills, like great sunflowers on dried stalks,
Stare hard at the sun they cannot follow.
Turning, turning, forever turning
In the chiU night-wind that sweeps over the valley,
With the shriek and the clank of the pumps groaning beneath them,
And the choking gurgle of tepid water.
John Gould Fletcher

LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE

When the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour
Greatening and darkening as it hurried on.
She left the Heaven of Heroes and came down
To make a man to meet the mortal need.
She took the tried clay of the common road
—

Clay warm yet with the genial heat of Earth,
Dasht through it all a strain of prophecy;
Tempered the heap with thrill of human tears;

Then mixt a laughter with the serious stufi.
Into the shape she breathed a flame to light
That tender, tragic, ever-changing face;
And laid on him a sense of the Mystic Powers,
Moving—all husht—^behind the mortal vail.
Here was a man to hold against the world,
A man to match the mountains and the sea.
The color of the ground was in him, the red earth;
The smack and tang of elemental things:
The rectitude and patience of the cliff;
The good-wiU of the rain that loves all leaves;
The friendly welcome of the wayside well;
The courage of the bird that dares the sea;
The gladness of the wind that shakes the com;
The pity of the snow that hides all scars;
The secrecy of streams that make their way
Under the mountain to the rifted rock;
The tolerance and equity of hght

That gives as freely to the shrinking flower
As to the great oak flaring to the wind

—

To the grave's low hill as to the Matterhom
That shoulders out the sky. Sprung from the West,
He drank the valorous youth of a new world.
The strength of virgin forests braced his mind,
The hush of spacious prairies stilled his soul.
His words were oaks in acorns; and his thoughts
Were roots that firmly gript the granite truth.
Up from log cabin to the Capitol,
One fire was on his spirit, one resolve

—

To send the keen ax to the root of wrong.
Clearing a free way for the feet of God,
The eyes of conscience testing every stroke,
To make his deed the measure of a man.
With the fine gesture of a kingly sovd,
He built the rail-pile and he bmlt the State,
Pouring his splendid strength through every blow:
The grip that swung the ax in Illinois
Was on the pen that set a people free.
So came the Captain with the mighty heart
And when the judgment thunders split the house,
Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest.
He held the ridgepole up, and spikt again
The rafters of the Home. He held his place

—

Held the long purpose hke a growing tree—

Held on through blame and faltered not at praise.
And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down
As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,
Goes down with a great shout upon the hills.
And leaves a lonesome place against the sky.
Edwin Markham

STANDARDS

White is the skimming gull on the sombre green of the fir-trees,
Black is the soaring gull on a snowy ghimmer of cloud.
Charles Wharton Stork

PANDORA'S SONG

Of wounds and sore defeat
I made my battle stay;
Winged sandals for my feet
I wove of my delay;
Of weariness and fear,
I made my shouting spear;
Of loss, and doubt, and dread,
And swift oncoming doom
I made a helmet for my head
And a floating plume.
From the shutting mist of death.
And the failure of the breath,
I made a battle-horn to blow
Across the vales of overthrow.
O hearken, love, the battle-horn!
The triumph clear, the silver scorn!
O hearken where the echoes bring,
Down the grey disastrous mom.
Laughter and rallying!
William Vaughn Moody

A WHITE IRIS

Tall and clothed in samite.
Chaste and pure.
In smooth armor,
—
Your head held high
In its helmet
Of silver:
Jean D'Arc riding
Among the sword blades!
Has Spring for you

Wrought visions.
As it did for her
In a garden?
Pauline B. Barrington

"FROST TO-NIGHT"

Apple-green west and an orange bar,
And the crystal eye of a lone, one star . . .
And, " Child, take the shears and cut what you will.
Frost to-night—so clear and dead-still."
Then I saUy forth, half sad, half proud,
And I come to the velvet, imperial crowd,
The wine-red, the gold, the crimson, the pied,
—
The dahhas that reign by the garden-side.
The dahlias I might not touch till to-night
A gleam of the shears in the fading light,
And I gathered them all,—the splendid throng,
And in one great sheaf I bore them along.
In my garden of Life with its aU-late flowers
I heed a Voice in the shrinking hours:
" Frost to-night—so clear and dead-still . . ."
Half sad, half proud, my arms I fill.
Edith M. Thomas.

SILVER

Slowly, silently, now the moon
Walks the night in her silver shoon;
This way, and that, she peers and sees
Silver fruit upon silver trees;
One by one the casements catch
Her beams beneath the silvery thatch;
Couched in his keimel, like a log.
With paws of silver sleeps the dog;
From their shadowy cote the white breasts peep
Of doves in a silver-feathered sleep;
A harvest mouse goes scampering by,
With silver claws, and a silver eye;
And moveless fish in the water gleam,
By silver reeds in a silver stream.
Walter de la Mare

FROM "VARIATIONS"

VI

You are as beautiful as white clouds
Flowing among bright stars at night:
You are as beautiful as pale clouds
Which the moon sets ahght.
You are as lovely as golden stars
Which white clouds try to brush away:
You are as bright as golden stars
When they come out to play.
You are as glittering as those stairs
Of stone down which the blue brooks nm:
You are as shining as sea-waves
AH hastening to the sun.
Conrad Aiken

AN OLD WOMAN OF THE ROADS

O, to have a httle house!
To own the hearth and stool and all!
The heaped up sods upon the fire,
The pile of turf against the wall!
To have a clock with weights and chains
And pendulum swinging up and down!
A dresser filled with shining delph,
Speckled and white and blue and brown!
I could be busy all the day
Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,
And fixing on their shelf again
My white and blue and speckled store!
I could be quiet there at night
Beside the fire and by myself,
Sure of a bed and loth to leave
The ticking clock and the shining delph!

Och! but I'm weary of mist and dark,
And roads where there's never a house nor bush,
And tired I am of bog and road,
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush!
And I am praying to God on high,
And I am praying Him night and day,
For a little house—a house of my own

—

Out of the wind's and the rain's way.
Padraic Colum

THE DARK CAVALIER

I am the Dark Cavalier; I am the Last Lover;
My arms shall welcome you when other arms are tired;
I stand to wait for you, patient in the darkness.
Offering forgetfulness of all that you desired.
I ask no merriment, no pretense of gladness,
I can love heavy lids and hps without their rose;
Though you are sorrowful you will not weary me;
I wiU not go from you when all the tired world goes.
I am the Dark Cavalier; I am the Last Lover;
I promise faithfulness no other hps may keep;
Safe in my bridal place, comforted by darkness.
You shall be happily, smiling in your sleep.
Margaret Widdemer

SAID A BLADE OF GRASS

Said a blade of grass to an autumn leaf,
"You make such a noise faUing! You scatter all my winter dreams."
Said the leaf indignant, "Low-born and low-dweUing!
Songless, peevish thing! You hve not in the upper air and you can
not tell the sound of singing."
Then the autumn leaf lay down upon the earth and slept.

IMAGES AND SYMBOLS iii

And when Spring came she waked again—and she was a blade of grass.
And when it was autumn and her winter sleep was upon her, and
above her through all the air the leaves were falling, she muttered
to herself, "O these autumn leaves! They make such a
noise! They scatter aU my winter dreams."
Kahlil Gibran

SYMBOLS

I saw history in a poet's song.
In a river reach and a gallows-hill.
In a bridal bed, and a secret wrong.
In a crown of thorns: in a daffodil.
I imagined measureless time in a day.
And starry space in a wagon-road,
And the treasure of all good harvests lay
In a single seed that the sower sowed.
My garden-wind had driven and havened again
All ships that ever had gone to sea,
And I saw the glory of all dead men
In the shadow that went by the side of me.
John Drinkwater

VAGARIES MALICIEUX

By Djuna Barnes

from **The Double Dealer, May 1922**

VAGARIES MALICIEUX

By DJUNA BARNES

from The Double Dealer, May 1922

FOR years one has dreamed of
Paris, just why, no man can tell,
saving that no pear from an orchard
stolen, has been atoned for without
the mental calculation: "A French
man would have understood; in Paris
all would be so simple, so charming!"
No man dares have a fixed opinion
on life, love or literature until he has
been to Paris, for there is always some
one at his elbow to hiss: "Have you
visited the Louvre? Have you reacted
to Giotto? Have you run your hand
over the furniture of the fifteenth cen-
tury? Seen the spot where Marie An-
toinette became most haughty? No?
Well then, my dear friend, keep in your
place."

Every day of one's life one has heard
such things as: "When your dear father
was drinking a whiskey and soda one
night on the Avenue de l'Opera, he was
accosted by two women, one with a rose
in her teeth, and one without" or "Well,
of course, I know that all philosophies
contradict themselves in the end, so I
have made it a point never to do any-
thing about it, until I visited Paris, then
I knew that I just had to express my
self!"

I have two friends who always go to
the opera, who never miss a D'alvarez
concert. One of these gentlemen is
very fond of cats and does a great deal
of stroking in the season, the other is
a playwright who is utterly reckless
about the number of objects in Europe
on which he casts what is known as his
libido.

Both of these gentlemen have been taken side face in Rome with a pigeon on either shoulder and three at their feet; each has eaten ducks in the only place where ducks die for the pleasure of it (I never found out where the place is) ; and both of them came back wearing cameos of the younger, darker sons of disgraced but lordly families.

And so it was that I, also, came to Europe.

It was a one class boat—to those without discrimination. The cargo was chiefly disappointed teachers from the Middle West, who sat on deck eating gift fruit sarcastically. In the evening they turned into the salon, drinking triple sec and trying to win at cards. A few of them thought they were being continental when they submitted to foreign embraces.

On board this boat there was a Frenchman, a gentleman, a professor, who had turned forty-three or so, who had possessed three hundred women and who was still under the delusion that "love makes the world go 'round."

The only member of the crew who spoke English was the one stewardess. She spoke with a distinct cockney accent, was nearly always drunk and explained it by saying that she was homesick for London. The nearer England we got the drunker she became, and finally ended by singing a Welsh war song while the students were singing the Marsellaise.

I sat at the captain's table with four others, one the professor, one a Belgian, who was returning to his country to sympathize, and the other two were ladies who had seen life and turned discreetly aside at the age of forty to let the rest of it pass unnoticed if it cared to. One of them spoke a magnificently degenerate French, which made the captain laugh, and was his undoing. This lady carried a dog which she

called "Fifi" after some French heroine who had lived a life somewhat on the dog's mincing and fluffy order and who had cried for cherry tarts and got them. The other lady was a widow, a little less certain, and her passion was ice. As for me I laughed—I laughed a great deal. The laugh is unusual. After one laugh the entire dining room was speculating on me—after the second they had made up their minds—after the third they were leading my life. In the evening I remembered a sorrow, but the good, kind professor had a past. It went something like this: "I have a nice mouth, but once it was prettier. That was when I had white teeth. Women used to turn and look at me, and one lady, she was a marquise, gave up her horse and carriage to follow me on foot, and still another girl, a Spaniard who had spent most of her life in Madrid, was willing to give up her husband and all her impressions—" I said, "Was that necessary?" He said, "No, that's the trouble, women always want to give up something." I said, "Isn't the sea beautiful?" He said, "I don't know. I can never be certain about great quantities of things—" Later he talked of love. "Love," he said, "should be miraculous, fastidious, and hopeless. We French have a strange feeling about American men. American women! Ah, there is something vital and lively about them—something proud and unreachd. The American man makes love somewhat in the fashion of a Frenchman fishing." He went on,— "I was walking along the banks of the Seine one day with a lady. We passed three men in the course of our walk, all were intent on the sport of angling, but not one of those three lines came within inches of the water. 'What is the mat

ter?' asked the lady. 'The matter,' I said, 'is that they cannot afford string.' "

There was a long pause in which the sea continued, "Then, too," the professor went on, "the average man believes in toutjours tout suite."

We heard a soft laughing sound, and looking down we saw a lady journalist lying on her stomach under a life boat with a Corona and a fountain pen.

We went away from there.

At about four one morning, by the reported time, though my watch, which had been set ahead half an hour every day, said two, the French woman in habiting my cabin, leapt from her bunk with an exclamation, and cried:

"Ah, unequalled France!" or words to that effect.

Le Havre lay before us. Two little French children stood at the extreme end of a jutting point of land, and called out to the pilot boat which was just pushing off. Behind them a blank wall reared up, and an enormous but shabby sign announced some inferior make of French soap.

From Le Havre one takes a train.

The train meets the boat. In fact, the train could be said to apprehend the boat. It creeps up a cobbled road and almost butts its nose into the nose of the sea.

Ah, those amazing French trains!

No comfort, but what atmosphere—no place to rest the elbows, but what companions! One negro, smoking a black cigar—one man from the Pyrenees in rough tweed—one heiress from the States with a slight down on her upper lip—one young woman from New Orleans on her way to Neufchatel to lay claim to a coat-of-arms, and one gentleman from Havana who kept weighing his watch chain !

For hours the little train struggled with the ground and finally conquered, running up a hill, on top of which stood

the Black Virgin.

Rouen passed. Everyone crowded to the windows, but there were no fields of poppies on that side, only a melancholy hill rose, and one church far in the distance, crouched among long grass in which no bird sang.

The Seine came into view. Placid people lay on their backs under trees, and children dipped their naked bodies in the slow thin water.

There were tears in the eyes of the Professor who had accompanied me to the very end, and I asked him if he suffered.

"Ah, ma chérie," he answered, "this is a very sad ride for a Frenchman who has been many years out in the States. One realizes how much of France has lived and died; and then there are so many lovely young women who have grown old and have not known me !" Presently everyone, saving myself and the Professor, slept. The negro's cigar had gone out. The gentleman from Havana had let his charms come to a standstill. The coat-of-arms, for which the young lady from New Orleans had ridden many an uncomfortable mile, was forgotten, and in peace the Professor and I dreamed our separate dreams—one of a land where no woman had been dearer than Jeanne d'Arc—one where no sweeter love were more obscure than mine !

Gare St. Lazar! A strange tongue, but no florists' booths, only one bootblackening parlor; and soda water and chewing gum noticeable for their absence.

And then the street.

"So this is Paris !"

Then the trembling sets in . The pit of the stomach turns cold. For the first time one realizes what one has done.

"Great God what have I done!" and then on its heels, "Great God how am I going to do it!"

Somehow I thought of Mount Olivet and of the lime trees, of some religion that had been waiting for my belief, and I asked the professor if there were any mountain crucifixes in France.

"A few, perhaps," he said "but you are thinking of the Tyrol." I recognized that I had been thinking of the Tyrol,—that my lack of knowledge of the ground of the world was going to get me into not only practical but sentimental troubles.

I found myself waiting for the flow of French to cease, for the French children at least to stop the game (some how one expects the children to be on one's side) for something a little more probable to happen. It took me several days to get over the sensation of dangerous make-believe, and as a matter of fact I am not yet quite sure that a Frenchman is not gaming when he talks to me, and I am almost ready to swear that the Bon Marche is a fraud, and that the Louvre is a somewhat flawless production of something French.. The feeling continued so long that, in the end, I asked a friend of mine, encountered later, if he did not experience a like sensation.

He answered that he did, that he was always smiling to himself, as much as to say, "You can begin to be authentic as soon as you like."

And so it was I came to Paris, and a few hours later was leaning out of my window in the Rue Jacob, and thinking in my heart of all unknown churches, and so thinking, I put on my cloak and went out to Notre Dame in the sad, falling twilight, and wandered under the trees and thought of another city, in a truly traitorous fashion, until, coming upon an old woman selling oranges, I thought how bitter and quick the odor was, and how charmingly unnecessary it was of them to be like that—and on this unnecessary I came into my own.

But Notre Dame somehow leaves you comparatively untouched, you may not remember her for fear of intruding. She is a lonely creature by preference. She is not disturbed by those devotees who fall into two classes; those going toward, and those coming from, faith. She is in the centre condition, where there is no going and no coming. Perhaps this is why, for me, there was something more possible in the church of Saint Germain des Pres, the oldest church in Paris. It is a place for those who have "only a little while to stay"—It too is aloof, but it has the aloofness of a woman loved by one dog and many men. And here one takes one's tears, leaving them unshed, to count the thin candles that rise about the feet of the Virgin like flowers on fire.

Coming from this church one evening I stopped a moment at the cafe of the "Deux Magots" and had a glass of wine, while Joyce, James Joyce, author of the suppressed "Ulysses," talked of the Greeks.

A quiet man, this Joyce, with the back head of an African idol, long and flat. The back head of a man who had done away with the vulgar necessity of brainroom. He spoke, too, of Moore "The Play boy of the Western world," he said, sipping his Black and White. He went on to speak of Yeats. "A good boy and a fine poet, but too proud in his clothes, and too fond of the aesthetic—as for the rest of them Irish stew ! They don't even know that Gaelic is not the tongue of Dublin!"

At another time, walking under an umbrella, he mentioned Synge, but not before he had taken a smell of the damp air.

"A great lump of a man who could not be argued with. It is said that he was a silent man, but he was not. I always disliked his 'Riders'. I was the first person he showed it to, and I told

him, then, to make a lasting argument—or to make none."

" 'But,' he protested, 'it's a good play, as good as any one-act play can be.' And it was then that I said that Ireland needed less small talk and more irrefutable art ; and that no one-act play, be it as good as its master, could be a knock down argument."

He smiled as he said this, showing those strangely spoiled and appropriate teeth.

Joyce lives in a sort of accidental aloofness. He is pleased when friends call, and he will go anywhere, it is said, and drink anything. He dislikes arttalk, and his friends are quite the common people.

His chief topic is Greek mythology, and he never tires of telling of the origin of Orion's name, information that would seem very shocking to the most scholastic mind, for he makes the Greeks 'naughty boys,' and leaves them shaking hands, across the gulf, with Rabelais.

He drifts from one subject to the other, making no definite division.

Presently one finds that he has come from the origin of Greek names to a certain Baroness called by the French "La Sirene."

His memory is said to be perfect (I had little chance to find out) and it has some of the slow dragging quality of an inland mist. "An old woman she was," he said speaking of this Baroness, "past seventy, and with the palsy. She was a Russian, a woman of wealth, and very lovely as a girl, but it was as an old lady that I saw her, nodding her head over a trunk full of pornographic plates. 'These I want you to have,' she said to me, 'they were collected throughout many years of a roving, dissatisfied life, the life of a lover of mine, a Greek.' "And with the word "Greek" I knew why Joyce had remembered her at all. "She told me," Joyce continued, "that

the hardest thing for a handsome woman is to look back over the past and 'it without legend'."

"But I did not write her story," he said suddenly, turning his black and red beard under the light. "It was too extraordinary, and a writer should never write about the extraordinary, that is for the journalist."

He went on, "She showed me the picture of her lover, the photograph hung at the foot of her bed, a fine fellow, with a black clipped beard and a wild look under the skin of his face."

Later Joyce explained why this woman was called "La Sirene."

"She had two islands off the Cretan coast, and there seven husbands were tearlessly buried, it is said, though she only admitted three to me. There was a rumor about that she had some very fine engravings illustrating the Odyssey, and I wrote her that I would like to see them. She came across the water herself, standing up in the little boat, her dog beside her, a great hat of straw on her head, and when she was within hailing distance she called out to me that I was no Englishman, and I called back 'No, Irish'."

Here I stopped to think what the picture must have been, the Baroness coming across the water, standing straight on her two legs with her dog beside her, throwing defiance and observation at this sad tall Irishman who had come to see Ulysses.

"The pictures turned out badly after all," he said. "The sirens had never been in a wind at all, for their hair was as set as a German wig, and the sea was just appropriately watered. Only one of the lot was, to me, at all pleasing—one in which the artist had conceived Ulysses as being tired and so sitting down to draw bow."

My mind wandered a little, I looked out into the square and wondered if I

would ever come to this cafe again. Just how long it was before I realized that Joyce had been talking to me I do not know, but when I gave him my attention again he was in the middle of a sentence whose conclusion was—"and that is how I missed seeing Tagore; another one of the world's misconceptions of the mystic. Because I had no evening clothes."

"One of the world's misconceptions of the mystic !" This ran about in my head a while and got mixed in, some way or other, with Joyce's next observation, that opals in iron were very fine finger rings and that he liked heavy perfumes, but one in particular, though he never used scent, the name I think, was appopynax, and here I lost all connection with this man, sad, quiet, and eternally at work.

The chic of Paris, the beauty of its women, the magic of its very existence—

One woman, turning the corner of the Place Vendome, which takes a fine curve into the Ritz and the bank of Morgan Harges, seen in the evening, was chic. Another hurrying down the Rue de la Paix, was handsome, but as I passed her I heard her saying to the man with the spectacles, who had her by the elbow : "We have underestimated American plumbing." And it was said without a touch of accent, either Oxford or Boston.

The French woman is small, high hipped and amusingly dark, her thoughts are local, and her husband is minute and physically fit, apparently, only in reminiscence.

But, I was told, I should not come to Paris in the summer weather, that Deauville and Djinar had the beauties and that the real French chic was only to be seen in carriages with drawn blinds ; that I must never hope to know the Frenchman, as he lives, unless I

could perform that most delicate of international relationships—the stranger past the threshold.

"Even little Madame Bovary would not have let you in at the gate, unless some good local clergyman had sent you, or unless you had the look of a great lover."

I have perhaps a little of this look, but I was not going to risk it on a sleeping country, so I ate my breakfast of cognac and coffee with an occasional crescent (much better ones can be had any morning at the Brevoort) alone, until it occurred to the Professor, who had once been wealthy, and still had friends with tenacious memories, that an introduction to a French family might amuse me, and do the family no little pleasure, for, as he says, my laughter is made up of the precarious moments in the life of man.

The pension on the Rue de Grenelle seemed cold and dark and what one might call 'set aside,' and I found myself stepping out of the carriage with a feeling probably no less vital than that felt by Anna Karenine when the Moscow express turned the fatal corner. Drawing my cloak about me, I stood in the chill of the court, with shadows on my high cheek bones no less rich, deep and mysterious than a Rembrandt's..

The Professor began whispering as he ascended :

"She is a fine woman. One of those women who have a definite procedure of the figure; a middle aged woman, wife of the nation's most remarkable obstetrical surgeon " he trailed off as the door to Madame's salon opened. How many years of my life had gone into picturing just such a room! Deep curtains of an exquisite and terrible baby blue, shut out the sunlight, in just proportion to the sun, trailing tassels of silver in the shadows. On the satincovered walls hung hundreds of gilt

frames, in which winsome women, of an earlier age, put up their back hair for someone, and still others half disclosed such busts as are dreamed of only by starved lithographers. These busts, garnished with a pressure of lace no more obtrusive than lashes on an eye lid, met the dying sunset more than half way.

Here were porcelains, too, vieing with each other for the supreme delicacy; little china women putting forth feet of such a ferocious tenuity that I was afraid to breathe my admiration; lace petticoats so sheer, so perforated and so unbelievable that I could almost see through to reality ; and as for the hands holding the outer skirt at just the right height—well, I have always wanted to found a religion for the appropriate acknowledgement of the tiny.

In the centre of this room stood a hand-painted spinnet; that instrument which comes nearest to breaking my heart, unless I except the music box. Over this spinnet a heavy embroidery was thrown, with the ennui of a progressive sophistication. Three times in my life, no more I think, have musical instruments been either covered or uncovered in such a way as to change my life. Once it was done toward evening and once toward morning, and once in this French home, and I think that this time in Paris was for me, shall I say, my last affair with arrangements in music and silk.

Over it hung the silence that is in one's heart for all women who have come in and out of boudoirs to no end but the grave, and have done it so bravely, with lace and scent and timely fashions of all sorts, running on satin slippers which left the heel at every step. Here, too, was that silence, while we waited for Madame who stood some where, drawing a long stopper out of a crystal bottle, while her canary pecked

his way around a golden cage.

Then Madame parted the curtains.

In her ears pendants swung, and because her exotic life could have no other outlet than her hands, ears and throat, she had dressed her throat in lace, high, to the ears, remembering the Divine Sarah; and on her hands there were many, many rings.

But she sat badly, not one foot before the other, as I had hoped she would, but with both legs at an even angle, the in step at flood-tide.

She talked a very pretty French, however, holding her head on one side, for she had a profile of a still insubordinate beauty, and an arrangement of mirrors proved someone in the household conscious of it.

Here were all those "differences" one craves in a "same" life; the bad taste, the restraint where one least expected it, the abandon in every day matters, the very way in which the street was shut out, the way the sunlight was let in, the way that Madame held her head, the fact too, that her husband, a little graying man with sharp eyes and beard, stood in the exact centre of a white fur rug, and placed his hands one against the other, as if they held the secret of his success in mutual reticence.

Nor was this all. The daughter, a child in her very early teens, was called up from her own salon on the second floor, where she had been entertaining the younger obstetrical generation, just to shake hands with "the pretty foreigner."

A child with dark hair braided, drawn back, and fastened with discreet bows of black satin,— a very baby in short skirts, who nevertheless laughed heartily when her mother told a rather naughty war story, involving an attack on the family virtue, and who spoke of international matters with a very personal twinkle in her eyes, finally show

ing me to the door with the remark, in charming English:

"I hope you will suffer prettily in Paris." Though I am sure she was much too young to know how astute the words were.

"Were they not adorable?" the Professor asked, and I said that they were, but I was thinking, should I ever come in contact with children still in their malicious years, I would give them no legend of Paris, unless I could be assured, on someone's dying word, that they would never be permitted to visit France.

"Here," the Professor of Romance Languages said, "vorticism, free verse and all this modern riff-raff, needs no expression. Our city is paved with good intentions, with this difference—the citizen fulfills them at every step." All life must be earned, or as our aunts would say, paid for, and the life of the Frenchman seems to have received precarious wages, for while they consider it very smart to copy the American, they have, at the same time, all the air of people who are under the delusion that, sooner or later, the copy will, have to be returned.

Walking down the Boulevard St. Germain one evening with the Professor, I said that the multiplication of Paris had been its destruction, and when he asked me what I meant, I said that too many people had reported Paris,—it had the fame of a too beautiful woman. One should never come within hailing distance of beauty in women, cities or religion.

"We have too many thousands of opinions to discard, and in the event of the inevitable discard too much goes. There is hardly a shred left."

"But," said the Professor, "does the historical mean nothing to you? Take Napoleon's tomb, for instance, does that bring nothing up in your imagination?"

and I said "That is like shooting can
non off over a lake choked with corpses,
no one corpse dares take the call, so all
of them lie still under the dragging."

"Well, the garden of the Luxem
bourg "

I said that it was all that I had imag
ined, but not quite what I had hoped.

"But surely the most lovely gardens
in the world are the gardens of the
Tuileries?"

I said that perhaps they were if the
search were after pure beauty, not asso
ciation, and I added, "I must have my
little association, being a woman."

"Well, then," he said, "what of the
bird market, the flower market, and the
markets as described by Zola?"

I answered him that the flower mar
ket left me comparatively cold. "For
once," I said, "I had a friend to whom
I sent flowers, and now that I may send
them no more, flowers have become for
me things I shall not think about," and
I added that the bird market filled me
with unassuageable emotions. I wanted
to have five frail girl friends to send
them to. Five little girls who should sit
in a row with closed eyes and hands
open, to receive five perch-crowding lin
nets. And failing this I should have
liked to send five little pies to five
dying queens, each pie the grave of some
melancholy swallow, or red-breasted
thrush, and to have the death-bed word
rise from among the falling of yellow
feathers.

"And, as for the vegetable markets
and the markets where fish, and livers,
and brains lie in pools of cold and lovely
blood, all these things I may not think
about at all, for no lesser eye than the
eye of the Master should be placed upon
them again. Once a vegetable has been
done justice, it needs neither after
thought nor forethought, and should be
eaten as unintentionally as possible."

"But the historic flower woman—"

the Professor said, returning.

"Ah," said I, "that is just the trouble, they have not renewed their history for at least eighty years it seems to me, and as for the flowers themselves, down to the oppressive pink, they have all enjoyed a past before you can pay the fifty centimes asked."

"What of our theatres?"

I answered that I found the theatres very dull, neither naughty nor nude.

"You can get down to all that your mother gave you and still leave me utterly unconvinced of the existence of nudity," I added for emphasis. "As for the naughty French joke," I continued, "perhaps I am in the seventh cycle of existence, for certainly I have found that I anticipate better than others conclude."

"But the Folies Bergere?"

I said that it made me a trifle sad to discover American songs in European conceptions of the foolish, and that the Elsie Janis number gave me a strong sensation of sinking on my own ship in someone else's pond.

The Professor returned to me.

"Well, all that may be very true, but think what a Frenchman feels when he goes to America and finds every actress, over forty, attempting the French manner of making love."

I said: "I should think you would suffer in a big, international way."

He said: "No, it isn't suffering exactly, it's a sort of unrequited hate."

We walked on a while in silence.

Coming into the lower end of the city, where the shadow of Notre Dame makes all filth and despair holy, we paused. In the darkness of the quai a middle-aged woman worked on a mattress, and nearer at hand, one dishevelled man shaved another, dipping the rusty razor into a shallow bowl of dark water, resting on the steps leading up into the outer world.

The Professor was wiping his moustache with an immaculate handkerchief and he was saying, "As for those theatres you know, they always take out the gestures during the hot season "

But I was thinking of the two old men who shaved one another while the world went by, for after all, men's hair will grow in spite of the Peace treaty and the fight for Irish rule.

The Professor told me that the French people do all precarious things beside the Seine, from science to love, and those things touching the conscience are all committed within stone's throw of Our Lady, because its proximity is an eternal and unsolicited forgiveness.

When the Professor had returned to me I asked him who bought the books which are for sale at a centime or so, all along the quai, and he said :

"American playwrights writing bedroom farces; authors describing Ohio women taking their stays off, and all poets trying to discover a reason for prose."

"And the swords and fire arms?"

"Those," he said, "are bought by middle-aged women from Connecticut, who have suffered too much from the lack of targets "

"And the medals?"

"Those," he replied, after a moment's smiling silence, "are bought by boys in their early teens, who have pictured Napoleon as having a different physique."

Then he asked me a question : "What do you think of our shops ?"

"The Bon Marche, the Galerie Lafayette, Printemps, the Louvre—" I shrugged, "horrible, like our worst stores on a half-holiday."

He answered, "Of course, no really smart Frenchwoman thinks of going to such places—she goes to the small, exclusive shops. Paquin, for instance."

I said that the French gowns made up by Paquin were 'very beautiful, but

I added: "They take the place of our vestments for holy orders, they do not seem to be for the general public."

"Isn't there anything you like?" he queried.

"Oh yes, I like the serious way you take your perfumes, powders, rouges, cosmetics of all sorts, and I like your cafes, and I like your early Italians and their dwindled Christs and Madonnas, and I like your churches, as I have said, and I like the way you walk, men especially, with a certain respect for the way their legs are fastened on—we Americans walk too much from the knee—and I like Cluny."

At this point, having bought a package of those colored crystal candies that the French do better than almost any thing else, I told him how I had loved Cluny until, walking through its corridors, and up and down its staircases, and looking into its boxes of old lace and boots of a past generation, I had called out "Où est Thais?" and called ceaselessly, until the guard was quite convinced that I had gone mad, and directed me to the room where the irons are kept that never really eased any husband's anxiety when he went off to battle. I looked at the armour and the firearms and the pottery and the saddles, and I turned away with the cry still in my heart.

For I was told, I said, by a little boy in New York, that in one museum or other, there lay the body of the most beautiful woman,—brief of flesh and of legend immortal, and that I had come to Paris more on her account than she on mine, and herein lay my pleasure and my pain.

"I did not know that she was a person," the Professor said, "I thought she was a hope and a despair."

I said that she had been all three, and there followed a long discussion into which were drawn three gendarmes and

two citizens, all of them more or less certain that no such thing as a tangible keepsake was left of this lovely creature, who had that swiftness which is beyond men's passions and their tears. "But we have the most lovely bric-a-brac," said the guard, and I, answering that I did not doubt him, went out through the gardens, where half destroyed satyrs and virgins lie among the long grass, as unmolested as the dead, for children and nurse maids play about them with a reverence that needs no civic reminder.

"Have you been up to the Montmartre?"

Ah, yes, I had been upon its ceaseless little hills, and one night I had dined there with a young man of the more serious type, who had insisted on dragging Edith Wharton and Ezra Pound into the conversation.

I did not want to listen to him, I liked looking at the dark dragon who kept the place, a heavy woman with that very French gesture on her upper lip—a moustache—and who brought what we should have ordered and didn't, hoping it was what we liked and shouldn't. But like most places—which the foreigner can easily find—it was spoiled by women speaking English to men who answered in American.

After this I had gone to "Hell," a cafe in the fashion of the infernal regions—as it would have been conceived by a man suffering from an inferiority complex—where nothing more devilish was committed during the whole evening, than an act in which St. Peter kissed the Golden Calf inappropriately, and where a lady without a "stitch to her name," whirled around and around on a plate, throwing a reflection of the performance in a dimmed mirror, while the urban and the suburban put their hands, at arm's length, between their knees and roared.

After this I had gone to the Bal

Tabarin with still another young man,
who had wanted me to be his asterisk,
and here I became much infatuated with
the back of a lady's neck.

Ah, that neck! It rose out of her
body like some fine pillar and took a
gracious curve into a head of a miracu-
lous pale gold, and the cheek of the
face, turning a little this way and that,
was as doll-pink as a painting by Demuth,
and when she turned full side
ways, the nose took up the curve of the
throat and descending in an ellipse,
swept under suddenly into a mouth of
feline softness.

Perhaps none of this happened at all,
perhaps it was what I hoped. Be that
as it may, all vanished when this lady
smiled. She smiled up into the face of
her beery partner (more beer is drunk
in Paris than in Berlin) a man I had
not seen for the charm of what I
thought she was going to be, and all was
over, for I discovered that the whole
front of her mouth was done in obli-
vious gold, and then, too, I noticed that
the real lace handkerchief in her thin
hand was very soiled, that she spoke in
some terrible Cockney dialect, and a
moment later was to be seen sitting at
the bar on a high stool, one leg thrust
down at the floor, like a withered pile
in thin water.

Women in European theatricals do
not know how to dance, I had found
that out, and this woman who had be-
trayed me with a miraculous neck, and
her stout partners were to utterly con-
vince me.

These three women were scheduled
to do an interpretative dance. They
came together around a pan of resin,
stamping their feet in the powder
(much as hens in a scrap bin) leaning
over to flex their ankles. The two stout
ones had been sitting across the room,
looking exactly like Tweedledee and
Tweedledum, with a sham bottle of

champagne leaning sideways in a pail
of imitation ice, the right foot of each
placed against the arch of the left, a
look of pleasant malice upon their
faces.

They kicked a little, it is true, but
they showed only very soiled frills, with
a vanishing point in cotton, and when
they turned around, they turned with a
peculiar slowness, having no connection
with the music whatsoever, and when
they did not like the music sufficiently
they did not dance at all, standing in
whatever forlorn attitude the last pleas-
ing chord had left them in, 'till they
came upon another more to their taste.
But no, it cannot be adequately de-
scribed. How many times I have tried
to do it for my Greenwich Village
friends (who can always be found at
the Rotonde in the afternoons) and
have failed.

So I seem to come at last, to the end
of my Paris days, and yet something
stays in my mind and worries me, like
a squirrel in a cage; something that
whirls about and about and would be
told.

Is it the story of the chambermaid in
the Rue Jacob perhaps? she who
brought me my breakfast every morn-
ing, holding one of those stiff little
brooms under her arm, pressed close to
her firm breast.

I had many a difficult hour with this
young woman—she could not have been
more 'than twenty-five—for she was
full of vigor and pleasant fancies, but
fortunately for the still able generation,
she had to work very hard, and could be
found any morning sitting up on the
landing, polishing away at huge boots
belonging to French and American
officers, and as she polished she kept
crying between excellent teeth: "Toujours
travaille!"

Or is it the story of L. L the
young man from the Swiss mountains,

who took me to lunch one day and wept
over his lobster, dropping "mots" on the
sadness of life and the instability of
women, while in between claws he told
of an affair he had cooked up between a
senile princess and her chimney sweep.
Or it is that hour between the two
when I set out to find a Norwegian
bracelet for a very small friend of mine,
only to come upon despair, for the
Paris evening is filled with the sound of
young men turning somersaults on the
sidewalks, and children trying not to
grow out of their clothes before they
can get around the corner and home, and
a slow haze, while at regulated inter-
vals, water can be heard dripping, drip-
ping, dripping.
And I say to myself, shall I tell the
world what Paris meant to me, or shall
I let it sit in its clubs, and its libraries
and its homes with Mark Twain and
Arthur Symonds on its knee, and such
desultory sketches as may have fallen
from the reeking pens of women, while
learning all that Americans failed to
notice, on some garden urn?
I do not know.



A TASTE OF HONEY

by Mary E Wilkins

from **A Humble Romance, and Other Stories**

1897, 1915

THE long, low, red-painted cottage was raised above the level of the street, on an embankment separated into two terraces. Steep stone steps led up the terraces. They were covered with green, slimy moss, and little ferns and weeds sprang out of every crack. A walk of flat slate stones led from them to the front door, which was painted green, sagged on its hinges, and had a brass knocker.

The whole yard and the double banks were covered with a tall waving crop of red-top and herds-grass and red and white clover. It was in the height of haying-time.

A grassy wheel-track led round the side of the house to a barn dashed with streaks of red paint.

Off to the left stretched some waving pasture-land, and a garden-patch marked by bean-poles and glancing cornblades, with a long row of beehives showing in the midst of it.

A rusty open buggy and a lop-eared white horse stood in the drive opposite the side door of the house.

An elderly woman with a green cotton umbrella over her head sat placidly waiting in the buggy. She had on a flattish black straw bonnet with purple strings, and wore a dullgreen silk shawl sprinkled with little bright palm leaves over her broad shoulders.

She had a large, smiling face, crinkly gray hair, and quite a thick white beard cropped close on her double chin.

The side door stood open, and a young woman kept coming out, bringing pails and round wooden boxes, which she stowed away in the back of the buggy and under the seat.

She was a little round-shouldered, her face with its thick, dull-colored complexion was like her mother's, just as pleasant and smiling, only with a suggestion of shrewd sense about it which the older woman's did not have.

When the pails and boxes were all in the buggy, she locked the door, got in herself, and drove carefully out of the yard.

The road along which they proceeded lay between waving grain fields. The air was full of the rattle of mowingmachines this morning; nearly every field had its broad furrows where they had passed.

The old white horse jogged slowly along ; the two women sat behind him in silence, the older one gazing about her with placid interest, the younger one apparently absorbed

in her own thoughts. She was calculating how much her butter and eggs and berries would bring in Bolton, the large market town towards which they were travelling.

Every week, Inez Morse and her mother drove there to sell the produce of their little farm. Her father had died three years before ; ever since, the daughter had carried on the farm, hiring very little help. There was a six-hundred-dollar mortgage on it, which she was trying to pay up. It was slow work, though they saved every penny they could, and denied themselves even the fruit of their own land. Inez had a mild joke about the honey which her bees made. She and her mother scarcely tasted it ; it all went to the Bolton markets.

" I tell you what 'tis, mother," Inez used to say,
" the day the mortgage is paid off we'll have warm biscuit and honey for supper."

Whenever her mother looked wistfully at the delicacies which they could not keep for their own enjoyment, Inez would tell her to never mind by and by they would eat their own honey. The remark grew into a sort of household proverb for them.

The mother felt their privations much more keenly than the daughter. She was one of those women for whom these simple animal pleasures form a great part of life. She had not much resource in her mind. The payment of the mortgage did not afford her the keen delight in anticipation that it did Inez ; she was hardly capable of it, though she would be pleased enough when the time came. Now she thought more about eating the honey. However, she had never grumbled at any of her daughter's management. In her opinion, Inez always did about right.

When they reached Bolton, Inez drove about the village from house to house, selling her wares at the doors, while her mother sat in the buggy and held the horse. She had a good many regular customers : her goods were always excellent, and gave satisfaction, though she had the name of being a trifle exacting in her bargains, and asking as much as she possibly could.

To-day one of her customers in making change did not give her enough by a cent. Inez, when she discovered it, drove back a quarter of a mile to have the error rectified.

The woman looked amused and a trifle contemptuous when she asked her for the missing penny. Inez saw it.

" You think it is queer that I came back for one cent." said she, with slow dignity, "but cents are my dollars."

" Yes, I suppose so," assented the woman, hastily, changing her expression.

Inez, driving through Bolton streets, looked at the girls of her own age, in their pretty street suits, in grave feminine admiration. She herself had never had anything but the very barest necessities in the way of clothes. Lately a vain desire had crept into her heart for a bright ribbon bow to wear at the throat, as some of those girls did. She never dreamed of gratifying the desire, but it remained. She thought of it so much that, before she knew, she mentioned it to her mother on their way home.

"Mother," said she,

" a red ribbon bow with long ends like those girls wore would be pretty for me, wouldn't it?"

Her mother stared at her in amazement. It did not sound like Inez.

" Real pretty, child," said she.

" I'd hev one ef I was you ; you're young, an' you want sech things.

I hed 'em when I was a girl."

"Oh, no, mother," cried Inez, hastily.

" Of course I never thought of such a thing really. I only spoke of it. We've got to wait till the mortgage is paid to eat our honey, you know."

That evening, after the mother and daughter had eaten their supper, and were sitting in the kitchen in the twilight, there came a knock at the door.

Inez answered it. Willy Linfield stood there.

" How do you do, Willy?" said she.

"Pretty well, thanky, Inez."

Then there was a pause. Inez stood looking gravely at the young man. She wondered what he wanted, and why he did not tell his errand.

" Nice evening ?" said he, finally.

"Beautiful."

Then there was another pause. The young fellow stood on one foot, then on the other, and got red in the face. Inez could not imagine why he did not tell her what he wanted. At last she grew desperate.

" Did your mother want to buy some eggs, Willy ?" she asked.

"No-o," he faltered, looking rather taken aback. "

I don't . she does leastways she didn't say anything about it."

" Was it butter, then ?"

" NO I guess not. I rather think she's got plenty."

Inez stared at him in growing amazement what did he want?

He was a fair-complexioned young man, and he looked as if the blood were fairly bursting through his face.

"Good-night, Inez," said he, finally.

"

Good-night, Willy," she responded. Then he walked off. Inez went into the kitchen, entirely mystified. She told her mother about it.

"What do you suppose he wanted?" asked she.

Mrs. Morse was an obtuse woman, but Inez's father had come courting her in by-gone days. She caught the clew to the mystery quicker than her daughter.

"Why, I guess he come to see you, Inez, most likely."

"Come to see me! Why, what for?"

"Why, 'cause he wanted to. Why does any feller go to see a girl?"

It was Inez's turn to color then.

"I never thought of such a thing as that," said she. "I don't believe it, mother."

"He did, sure's preachin'."

"I never thought of asking him to come in. I guess you are mistaken, mother. Nobody ever came to see me so."

Inez kept thinking about it uneasily. It was a new uneasiness for her.

The next day she met Willy Linfield in the village store.

She stepped up to him at once.

"Willy," said she,

"I didn't ask you to come in last night, and I thought, p'rhaps, afterwards, I'd ought to. I never thought of your wanting to come in. I supposed you'd come on an errand."

The young fellow had looked stiff and offended when she first approached him, but it was impossible to doubt her honest apology.

"Well, I kinder thought of making a little call on you, Inez," he owned, coloring.

"I'm very sorry, then; but no young man ever came to see me before, and I never thought of such a thing."

She looked into his face pleasantly. He gained courage.

"Say, Inez," said he,

"the bell-ringers are going to perform in the hall to-morrow night. Wouldn't you like to go with me?"

"Yes, I'd like to. Thank you, Willy."

Inez was not easily perturbed, but she went home now in a flutter. Such a thing as this had never happened to her before. Young men had never shown much partiality for her. Now she was exceedingly pleased. She had never realized that she cared, because she had not had the experiences of other girls; but now her girlish instincts awoke. She really had a good deal of her mother's simplicity about

her, though it was redeemed by native shrewdness. Now she began to revolve in her mind again the project of the red ribbon. She did want it so much, but she felt as if it was such a dreadful extravagance. At last she decided to get it. She actually looked pale and scared when she stood buying it at the counter in the little millinery shop.

She went home with it, feeling a guilty delight, and showed it to her mother, and told her of Willy Linfield's invitation. She had not before. This was on the afternoon of the concert day.

" My !" said her mother, elated,
"you've got a beau, Inez,
as sure as preachin', an' the red ribbon's beautiful."
Inez could not, however, rid herself of the guilty feeling. She gave her mother a piece of honeycomb for her supper.
"

It ain't fair for me to be buying ribbon out of the mortgage money, and mother have nothing," said she to herself.

" So she must have the honey, and that makes two things out."

But when Inez, with the crisp red bow at her throat, followed her escort awkwardly through the lighted hall, and sat by his side listening to the crystal notes of the bellringers, the worry about the ribbon and the weight of the mortgage seemed to slip for a moment from her young, bowed shoulders. She thought of them, only to look at some other girls with ribbons, and to be glad that she had one too. She was making a grasp, for a few minutes, at the girlhood she had never had.

The concert was Wednesday. Saturday she and her mother drove again to Bolton to sell their butter and eggs. When they got home, Inez opened the parlor, which was never used, and swept and dusted it. It was a grand apartment to her and her mother. It had never been opened since her father's funeral. When she first unclosed the door to-day she seemed to see the long coffin in the middle of the floor, where it had rested then.

She shuddered a little.

" Folks that have had troubles
do see coffins afterwards, even when they're happy, I suppose,"
muttered she to herself.

Then she went to work. There was a large mahogany bureau in one corner of the room ; some flag-bottomed chairs stood stiffly around ; there was an old-fashioned card-table, with Mrs. Heman's poems and the best lamp in a bead lamp-mat on it, between the two front windows. A narrow gilt-framed looking-glass hung over it.

Mrs. Morse heard Inez at work, and came in.

"What

air you doin' on, Inez?" she asked in wonder.

"

I just thought I'd slick up here a little. Willy Linfield said he might drop in awhile Sunday night." Inez did not look at her mother. Somehow she felt more ashamed before her than she would have before a smarter woman.

"My sakes, Inez, you don't say so ! You have got a beau as sure as preachin'. Your father kept right on reg'lar, after we once set up of a Sunday night. You'll have to put a new wick in that lamp, Inez."

"

I'll see to it, mother," replied Inez, shortly. She was delighted herself, but she felt angry with her mother for showing so much elation ; it seemed to cheapen her happiness. Sunday, Inez went with her mother to church in the morning and afternoon. She went to Sabbath-school after the morning service too. She was in a class of girls of her own age. She had never felt, someway, as if she was in the least one of their kind. She never had the things they had, or did anything which they were accustomed to do. Today she looked at them with a feeling of kinship. She was a girl too. Three or four of them had lovers. Inez eyed them, and thought how she had one too, and he was coming to-night as well as theirs.

She had work to do Sundays as well as week-days. There were cows to milk and hens to feed. But she changed her dress after supper, and put on the new redribbon bow. She picked a little nosegay of cinnamon roses out in the front yard (there were a few of these little dwarf roses half buried in the tall grass there), and arranged them in an old wine-glass on the parlor mantel. When she heard Willy's feet on the slate walk and his knock on the front door, her heart beat as it never had before.

"There's your beau, Inez !" cried her mother ;

"he's come !"

Inez was terribly afraid Willy would hear what her mother said ; the windows were all open. She went trembling to the door, and asked him into the garnished parlor.

Mrs. Morse stayed out in the kitchen. The twilight deepened. She could hear the soft hum of voices in the parlor.

"Inez is in there courtin'," said she.

"Her father an' me

used to court, but it's all over. There's something queer about everything."

Willy Linfield came many a Sunday night after that. It

was said all around that Willy Linfield was "going" with Inez Morse. Folks wondered why he fancied her. He was a pretty, rather dandified young fellow, and Inez was so plain in her ways. She looked ten years older than he, though she was about the same age.

One Monday afternoon, she told her mother that Willy, the night before, had asked her to marry him. The two women sat at the kitchen windows, resting. They had been washing, and were just through. The kitchen floor wa* freshly scoured ; everything looked damp and clean.

"You don't say so, Inez!" cried her mother, admiringly.

" What did you tell him? Of course you'll have him ; he's a real nice feller; an' I don't believe you'll ever get anybody else."

"

I told him I'd have him if he'd wait three years for me to pay off the mortgage," replied Inez, quietly.

" Did he say he would ?"

"Yes."

"

It's a long time for a feller to wait," said her mother, shaking her head dubiously.

" I'm afeard you'll lose him,

Inez."

" Then I'll lose him," said Inez. " I'm going to pay off that mortgage before I marry any man. Mother, look here," she went on, with a passion which was totally foreign to her, and showed how deeply she felt about the matter.

"You know a little how I feel about that mortgage. It ain't like any common mortgage. You know how father felt about it."

"Yes, I know, Inez," said her mother, with a sob.

"

Many's the time," Inez went on,

" that father has talked

about it to me over in the field there. He'd been trying all his life to get this place clear; he'd worked like a dog; we all worked and went without. But to save his life he couldn't pay it up within six hundred dollars. When the doctor told him he couldn't live many months longer, he fretted and fretted over it to me. I guess he always talked more about his troubles to me, mother, than he did to you."

"

I guess he did, Inez."

"Finally I told him one day it was when he was able to be about, just before he gave up ; I was out in the garden picking peas, and he was there with his cane.

'Inez,' says he,

' I've got to die an' leave that mortgage unpaid,
an' I've been workin' ever since I was a young man
to do it.'

Father,' says I,
' don't you worry, ril pay up that mortgage.'
' You can't Inez,' says he. *
Yes, I will,'
says I ;

I promise you, father.' It seemed to cheer him
up. He didn't fret so much about it to me afterwards, but
he kept asking me if I thought I really could. I always
said,
' Yes.'

"Now, mother, if I marry Willy now, nobody knows
what's going to be to hinder my keeping my promise to
father. Willy ain't got anything laid up, and he ain't very
strong. Besides, he's got his mother and sister to do for.
Hattie's just beginning to help herself a little, but she can't
do much for her mother yet. Mrs. Linfield ain't able to
work, and Willy's got to look out for her. Then I've got
you. And there might be more still to do for in the course
of two or three years ; nobody knows. If I marry Willy
now, I shall never pay off that mortgage, that I promised
poor father I would, and I ain't going to do it. It'll take
just three years to pay it every cent ; and then I'll marry
him, if he's willing to wait. If the mortgage was just for
me I wouldn't care, though I don't think it would be very
wise, anyway. But it's for father."

Mrs. Morse was crying.

"I know you're jest right about
the mortgage, Inez," she sobbed ;
" but you'll lose your
beau as sure as preachin'."

Nevertheless, it seemed for a long time as if she would
not. Willy kept faithful. He was a good sort of young
fellow, and very fond of Inez, though he hardly entered into
her feelings about the mortgage. There was at times a perfect
agony of pity in her heart over her father. It made no
difference to her that all his earthly troubles were over for
him now. When she thought over how he had toiled and
worried and denied himself for the sake of owning their little
farm clear, and then had to die without seeing it accom-
plished, it seemed as if she could not bear it. The pitiful
spectacle of her poor, dull father working all his life for
such a small aim in such small ways, in vain, haunted her.
During the next three years she strained every nerve.

She denied herself even more than she had formerly. Sometimes she used to think her clothes were hardly fit for her to appear in beside Willy, he always looked so nice. But she thought he knew why she dressed so poorly, and would not mind. "

It brings the time when we can eat our honey nearer," she said.

Willy was faithful for a long time ; but, the last six months of the third year, he began to drop off a little. Once in a while he would miss a Sunday night. Inez fretted over it a little , but she did not really think of doubting him, he had been constant to her so long. Besides, there was only one more payment to be made on the mortgage, and she was so jubilant over this that she was hopeful about everything else.

Still, it was not with an altogether light heart that she went to the lawyer's office one afternoon and made the last payment. She was not so happy as she had anticipated. Willy had not been near her for three weeks now. She had not seen him even in church.

Still, she went straight to his house from the lawyer's office ; that had been the old laughing bargain between them. She was to go and tell him the good news ; then he was to go home with her, and help eat the festive supper of warm biscuits and honey.

She walked right in at the side door, and entered the sitting-room. She was familiar with the place. In the sitting-room sat Willy's mother and sister. They both started when they saw her.

"Oh, mother, here she is !" cried Hattie, without speaking to Inez.

Inez's heart sank, but she tried to speak naturally.

"Where's Willy?" asked she. "He's home from the shop, ain't he? I've made the last payment on the mortgage, and I've come to tell him."

The mother and daughter made no reply, but gazed at each other in silent distress.

"Oh, Inez !" cried Hattie, at length, as if she had nothing else to say.

" Come into the parlor a minute with me,

Inez," she added, after a little.

Inez followed her trembling.

Hattie shut the door, and threw her arms around Inez.

"Oh, Inez!" she cried again, and began weeping ;

"I don't

know how to tell you. Willy has treated you awful mean.

We've all talked to him, but it didn't do any good. Oh,

Inez, I can't tell you ! He's gone over to West Dorset

this afternoon to get married ! Oh, Inez ?"

" Who is he going to marry ?"

" Her name's Tower Minnie. Oh, Inez, we're so awful sorry ! He hasn't known her long. We never dreamed of such a thing."

" Never mind," said Inez, quietly.

" Don't take on so, Hattie. Perhaps it's all for the best"

"

Why, don't you care, Inez ?"

There was a pitiful calm on Inez's dull face.

" There's

no use fretting over what can't be helped," said she.

" I

don't think Willy has acted bad. I made him wait a long time."

" That was the trouble, Inez."

"

I couldn't help it. I should do it over again."

Inez took it so calmly that the other girl brightened. She had felt frightened and distressed over this, but she had not a very deep nature.

"

Inez," said she, hesitatingly, when she made a motion to go ; "they've got a room fixed up-stairs, you know; would you like to see it ? It looks real pretty."

Inez shuddered. This fine stab served to pierce the deepest, though she knew the girl meant all right.

"

No, thank you, Hattie, I won't stop."

Inez was thankful when she got out in the air. She felt a little faint. She had to walk a mile before she reached home. Once she stopped and rested, sitting on a stone beside the road. She looked wearily around at the familiar landscape.

" The mortgage is paid," said she,

" but I'll never eat my honey."

Her mother was watching at the kitchen window for her when she entered the yard.

" Is it paid, Inez ?" asked she, eagerly, when the door opened.

" Every cent, mother," replied the daughter, kissing her something she seldom did ; she was not given to caresses.

" Where's your beau ?" was the next question.

" I thought you was going to bring him home."

" He ain't coming, mother. He's gone over to West Dorset to get married."

"Inez Morse, you don't mean to say so! You don't mean you've really lost your beau ? Wa'al, I told you you would."

Mrs. Morse sat down and began to cry.

Inez had taken her things off, and now she was getting out the moulding-board and some flour.

"What air you doin' on, Inez?"

" I'm making the warm biscuit for supper, mother, to eat with the honey."

"You ain't goin' to make warm biscuit when you've lost your beau ?"

"I don't see why that need to cheat us out of our supper we've talked about all these years."

"I do declar', I don't believe you mind it a bit," said the poor, simple mother, her sorrow for her daughter lighting up a little.

" I don't care so much but what I've got enough comfort left to live on, mother."

"

Wa'al, I'm glad you kin look at it so, Inez ; but you air a queer girl."

The biscuit were as light as puffs. Inez's face was as cheerful as usual when she and her mother sat down at the little table, with the biscuit and golden honey-comb in a clear glass dish between them. The mother looked placidly happy. She was delighted that Inez could " take it so."

But when she saw her help herself to the biscuit and honey, she said again ;

" You air a queer girl, Inez. I know the mortgage is paid, an' I only wish your poor father knew, an' here we sit eatin' the warm biscuit and honey. But I should think losin' your beau would take all the sweetness out of the honey."

The pleasant patience in Inez's face was more pathetic than tears. "

I guess there's a good many folks find it the same way with their honey in this world," said she. "Tomorrow, if it's pleasant, we'll drive to Bolton, and get you a new dress, mother."



